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"Christian Conversion" as a Radical Philosophical Turn

: Lukan Literary Efforts in Describing Paul's "Conversion"

in Acts 9, 22, and 26

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Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2015

For my parents, Taek, and Jeeyin

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professors L. Michael White and Steven J. Friesen for their continuous intellectual and emotional support from the beginning of my study at the University of Texas at Austin until the completion of this report. I especially thank my supervisor Professor White for his insights, patience, and humor without which I would not have completed this study. Any remaining shortcomings and errors are mine alone.

Abstract

"Christian Conversion" as a Radical Philosophical Turn

: Lukan Literary Efforts in Describing Paul's "Conversion"

in Acts 9, 22, and 26

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

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The present report analyzes the three Lukan accounts on Paul's "conversion" in Acts 9:1-31, 22:6-21, and 26:12-17 in consideration of the contemporary literary milieu of the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish discourses on one's "conversion," i.e., a radical change as discarding his/her former thoughts. Through this analysis, I argue that Luke redescribed Paul's experience of the risen Christ as a "conversion," and in doing so, constructed the concept of "Christian conversion" as a radical philosophical turn. In his undisputed letters, we find that Paul understood his encounter with the risen Christ as a "calling" within the Hebrew prophetic tradition. On the contrary, Luke stresses the radical rupture between Paul's before and after the revelatory experience by making it an immediate change and adding details such as Saul's activities as a persecutor and his name change. In recasting Paul's experience as a "conversion," Luke utilized two main literary elements to characterize the nature of his experience as a radical cognitive shift.

One is the metaphor of transition from darkness to light, which is applied to Paul in Acts 9 and 22 as he becomes blind after seeing the light and to the gentile conversion in Acts 26 that they should "turn from darkness to light (v.18)." Another is the notion of repentance that Luke applies directly to Paul in Acts 9 and 22 in his baptism and to the gentile conversion in Acts 26. These two motifs are what we often find in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish texts discussing one's radical cognitive shift to a new philosophical system or the Jewish monotheism upon the revelation of a true teaching. By applying these motifs to the "conversion" of Saul, Luke identifies Paul's experience and "Christian conversion" as a radical philosophical turn from ignorance to a correct understanding of the messiah and the God. With the Lukan literary and conceptual efforts in Acts, Paul now becomes a paradigmatic "Christian convert" and a philosopher in Acts whose radical cognitive shift can be followed by Jews and gentiles in the Roman world.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Two different sets of early Christian writings have direct accounts of Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus often called his "conversion" experience. One is Paul's own comments in Gal. 1:11-24 and 1 Cor. 15:1-11, and the other is Luke's descriptions in Acts 9:1-31, 22:6-21, and 26:12-17.[1] The problem is that there exist numerous discrepancies between Paul and Luke in depicting Paul's experience, as well as between the three accounts in Acts. From Paul's letters, we learn that he had a religious experience of some sort, which eventually changed him from a persecutor to an apostle of the Jesus movement. Paul also describes his experience as a "call" and "revelation" (Gal. 1:11-24), and as having the similar qualities with the twelve disciples' experience of the risen Jesus (1 Cor. 15:1-11). Paul, however, does not elaborate on his experience, nor does he make it a main subject in his letters. From Paul's letters, we do not know how much time had passed between his initial encounter with the risen Christ and the beginning of his missionary activity. In Acts, on the other hand, we find details that we do not see in Paul's letters. To mention a few, Paul's experience happens on his road to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus (Acts 9:2; 22:6; 26:12); it involves detailed visionary and auditory elements (9:3-9; 22:6-10; 26:13-18); Paul recognizes his gentile mission immediately or shortly after the encounter (22:17-21; 26:16-18; Cf. 9:15); Paul becomes blind and recovers with the mediation of another person, Ananias (9:9, 17-18; 22:11-13; cf. 26:18); there are additional elements such as Paul's baptism and repentance (9:18; 22:16; Cf. 26:18). Noticing the discrepancies between Paul and Luke is important because it is directly related to the question whether we can call Paul a "convert" or not. Considering the differences between Paul and Luke in describing Paul's experience of the

[1] With the name "Luke," I refer to the Lukan author who wrote the two-volume work of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

risen Christ, did Paul think of himself as a "convert," or is it Luke that recasts him in this way? If the answer is the latter, what kind of "conversion" does Luke construct through Paul's case in Acts?

Many scholars have asked these questions and come up with varying explanations. Early scholars in general did not take the discrepancies between Paul and Luke seriously in reconstructing Paul's experience. William James and A. D. Nock, for instance, used the two sources harmoniously and concluded that Paul was a very typical Christian "convert" who came out from Judaism and turned to Christianity.[2] Others, such as A. von Harnack and G. Lüdermann, noticed the discrepancies but explained those as resulting from Luke's additional sources that are no longer extant, such as the oral tradition about Paul.[3] These scholars assumed that it is possible to extract historical facts from Acts to reconstruct Paul's own authentic experience, and thus delineated the Lukan redactional elements from what can be attributed to the "historical tradition."[4] Although this approach might provide some clues in understanding the discrepancies, it is fundamentally tentative because we cannot recover these supposed sources. More importantly, close comparison

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[2] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1985), 178; A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1933), 191.

[3] Adolf Harnack, *The Acts of the Apostles* (trans.; J. R. Wilkinson, 1909), 162-202, 231-32. Harnack considered Luke, the physician and a travel companion of Paul, to be the writer of Acts. Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 9. For a similar assumption, see David Gill, "The Structure of Acts 9," *Biblica* (1974): 546. Gill takes Lukan account of Paul's "conversion" as historically accurate, as being based on the historical tradition. Concerning the discrepancy between the accounts in Acts and Galatians on Paul's trip to Jerusalem, Gill says "structurally the two accounts are strictly parallel" and dismisses the difference in detail as resulting from Lukan literary technique. See page 547-48. Cf. For a general source-critical approach to Acts, refer to Jacques Dupont, *The Sources of Acts: The Present Position* (trans. Kathleen Pond; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964).

[4] Cf. G. Lohfink, *The Conversion of St. Paul: Narrative and History in Acts* (trans. Bruce J. Malina; Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1976), esp. 101-103.

between Paul's letters and Acts indicates that Luke was indeed using some of Paul's letters in writing Acts, including Paul's "conversion," by modifying the details and incorporating other contemporary literary motifs used to depict one's radical philosophical shift from one system to another. An overly simplistic tradition-history approach limits our understanding of Lukan literary hand to freely select and recreate Paul's experience for his own theological and narratological agenda in Acts.

Criticizing previous approaches, scholars such as K. Stendahl, B. Gaventa, and A. F. Segal considered the differences between the Paul's letters and Acts as resulting from Luke's literary hand.[5] While they came up with different interpretations on the discrepancies and the purpose lying behind, their researches are valuable in that they placed Acts within the larger religious and literary context to understand the Lukan literary efforts and their implications. I also think that this is the most fruitful way to approach the discrepancies.

In this paper, by analyzing the three Lukan accounts on Paul's "conversion" in Acts 9, 22, and 26, I will argue that Luke has redescribed Paul's experience of the risen Christ as a "conversion" in the contemporary religious context, and in doing so, has constructed a concept of "Christian conversion" as a radical cognitive transformation. By reading Luke's accounts with reference to Paul's letters, the LXX, and other Hellenistic writings, I will show that Luke creatively used his sources and in particular, argue that that he incorporated literary motifs often used in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish discourses on one's radical transformation to a new philosophical school or Jewish monotheism to depict Paul's experience as a radical philosophical turn. It is Luke, not Paul, who interpreted Paul's experience as a "Christian conversion," and made it a

[5] For a similar approach, see Ira J. Jolivet, Jr., "The Lukan Account of Paul's Conversion and Hermagorean Stasis Theory," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* (1999): 210-21, esp. 210-11; Dennis Hamm, "Paul's Blindness and Its Healing: Clues to Symbolic Intent (Acts 9; 22 and 26)," *Biblica* (1990): 63-72; See note 128 for more bibliographical information.

model that can be followed both by Jews and gentiles. Paul as an idealized "convert" to the Jesus movement, reflects Luke's literary effort to establish the concept of "Christian conversion" for the developing church in the Hellenistic Roman world.

1.1. Previous Scholarship on Paul's Religious Experience

To understand the Lukan construction of "Christian conversion," I first review previous scholarship on the definition of religious conversion and Paul's experience in relation to this definition. Religious conversion is a giant topic in the field of religious studies, and I only focus on the studies relevant in understanding Paul's experience of the risen Christ as described in Paul's undisputed letters and Acts.

James, whose understanding of conversion greatly influenced subsequent studies in the field, understood religious conversion as a drastic change in one's emotional consciousness. He defines it as:

> To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided or consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, by consequence of its firmer hold on religious realities. This at least is what conversion signifies in general terms, whether or not we believe that a direct divine operation is needed to bring such a moral change about.[6]

According to James, conversion is a positive change that a convert's status is objectively improved, from a person with a divided consciousness to one with a unified whole.[7] Although James acknowledged a gradual form of conversion, he considered a sudden type of conversion, which involves a crisis or a sudden event, to be a more definite case of religious conversion.[8]

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[6] James, *The Varieties*, 157.
[7] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 9.
[8] James, *The Varieties*, 162.

With this definition, James placed two conditions that precede a person's conversion. One is the "present incompleteness or wrongness, the 'sin' which he is eager to escape from," and another is "the positive ideal which he longs to compass."[9] For James, Paul was the most eminent religious convert in history. James quotes Rom. 7:19, which he understands as Paul's "self-loathing, self-despairing" utterance with his "unintelligible and intolerable burden."[10] James also assumes that the Lukan description of Paul's radical change on the road to Damascus is historically accurate, and that it describes Paul's radical change from an inferior to a superior consciousness.

The problem with James' understanding of Paul's experience, however, is that he considered the already-interpreted version of Paul's change to define it as a "conversion." James lists Saint Augustine also as a classic example of a person with divided self and troubling consciousness, and experienced a radical "conversion."[13] Augustine in turn interpreted Paul's experience based on his own experience, and this version of Paul's change is what James used for his understanding of Paul's "conversion." As I will discuss in Chapter 4, however, while Paul uses the terms such as "grief" and "regret" in relation to the notion of "repentance," these emotions are not at the center of repentance. In other ancient Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish writings as well, terms denoting emotion are present in their discussion of one's radical shift to a new philosophical system or the Jewish religiosity, but they are subsidiary to the cognitive aspect of the turn. Paul's letters also do not indicate that Paul understood his past as being troubled by a "divided" soul or himself as experiencing any sort of emotional advance in his acceptance of Jesus. In sum, James did not acknowledge the discrepancies between Paul and Luke in describing Paul's experience of the risen Christ. Rather, it seems that

[9] James, *The Varieties*, 172.

[10] Rom. 7:19: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." James, *The Varieties*, 143, 178.

[13] James, *The Varieties*, 147.

Luke's descriptions of Paul in Acts, together with the interpretations by Augustine and Luther, are what influenced James to understand Paul's experience.[14]

Following some of James' understanding of conversion, in his study of ancient Mediterranean religion Nock defined conversion as:

> By conversion we mean the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right.[15]

According to Nock, "conversion" is a radical transformation that requires a complete renunciation of one's past to accept a new system of belief and worship.[16] This can happen not only when one switches from one religious system to another, but also within a religion, as a person formerly indifferent to certain religious ideas now acknowledges their value. What is characteristic of this change is the dramatic cognitive shift that "the old was wrong and the new is right."

In particular, Nock contrasted this concept of "conversion" to the phenomenon which he calls "adhesion." In "adhesion," people do not throw away their previous forms of piety but just "add" a new form as "useful supplements and not as substitutes, and it [adhesion] did not involve the taking of a new way of life in place of the old."[17] According to Nock, "adhesion" is observed in most of the Greco-Roman religions, when people accept new form of piety not because of creedal but cultural reason. On the other hand, "conversion," as defined above, is a phenomenon where a person turns away completely from his/her former religious/philosophical attachment to accept a new one, which is observable in the cases of Judaism, Christianity, and some Hellenistic

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[14] James, *The Varieties,* 199-200.
[15] Nock, *Conversion,* 7.
[16] Nock, *Conversion,* 5-6.
[17] Nock, *Conversion,* 7.

philosophical schools.[18] Nock argues that it was only after the Christianity that a "genuine" conversion type of change began to emerge in the pagan religions.[19]

Based on this understanding of "conversion," Nock says that Paul converted when he encountered the risen Jesus, and that this was the first conversion case that we know of in the ancient Mediterranean world:

> Paul, on the other hand, had regarded them and theirs as apostates and had thrown himself heart and soul into the struggle to suppress them. For him to become a Christian meant in the first instance a complete change of face. It is the first conversion to Christianity of which we have knowledge. He brought to it not merely a fresh enthusiasm but also an imperious inner need to discover an interpretation and reconciliation of the old and the new in his religious life.[20]

It is important for the current study that Nock, differently from James who focused on the emotional shift in conversion, pointed out the cognitive aspect as essential in defining the "conversion" in antiquity. He notes that Paul's experience, based on the combined information from Paul's letters and Acts, required him to radically reinterpret his old ideas. Nock also observed similarities between the experiences of those who newly join the church and who join the Hellenistic philosophical schools. They both involve radical cognitive shift that requires accepting exclusive claims of the group and acknowledging the fact that their former ideas were wrong.[21] For the Hellenistic philosophical schools, although this cognitive turn had to be accompanied with appropriate behavioral changes, acceptance of a new way of thinking was considered to be fundamental to one's entry

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[18] Nock, *Conversion,* 1-16, 164-69, 173. Nock presents Greco-Roman texts that share the similar terms with Judaeo-Christian conversion accounts. For instance, Poimandres, *Tract. 28*; *Tabula of Cebes*; Plato, *Rep.* 518d; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, I. 77.

[19] Nock, *Conversion,* 15.

[20] Nock, *Conversion,* 191.

[21] Nock, *Conversion,* 8, 165-69.

process.[22] As I will elaborate in the following chapters, in Luke's descriptions of Paul's experience we also find terms and motifs often used in Greek philosophical schools to describe this cognitive change.

In his analysis of "conversion" in the early church and Paul, however, Nock did not take into account seriously the discrepancies between Paul's letters and Acts. His understanding of Paul's experience was thus heavily influenced by Luke's description, and subsequently he failed to note the distinctive ideas on "Christian conversion" that Luke developed through reinterpreting Paul's case. Nock accepts the description in Acts at face value, such as the amplified version of Paul's persecution before his "conversion," thus over-evaluating the radicality of his change.[23] While I think Nock was correct in pointing out the cognitive aspect in Paul's "conversion" as depicted by Luke, I do not see Paul understanding his own experience as such.

At the same time, due to his sharp distinction between philosophy and religion in the ancient world, Nock did not go on to analyze the possible interactions between the philosophical and Judaeo-Christian discussions on conversion. Throughout the Hellenistic and Roman period, Jewish and early Christian writers actively engaged in the conversations between contemporary philosophical ideas, and the notion of conversion in Acts should be studied in close comparison with its contemporary Greco-Roman philosophical discussions on one's radical transformation. Consideration of the wider literary milieu surrounding Acts will illuminate some of Lukan literary efforts in describing Paul's "conversion."

Criticizing previous scholarship for using the anachronistic term of "conversion" to describe Paul's experience, Krister Stendahl argued that Paul was not "converted" but

[22] Nock, *Conversion,* 180-1.
[23] Nock, *Conversion,* 191-91.

"called."[24] Stendahl first pointed out that "conversion" is a modern term that was not used by the people in the first century Mediterranean world, surely not Paul.[25] More problematic is, according to Stendahl, that Paul's letters and Acts both describe Paul's experience as a "call" in the Hebrew prophetic tradition, but not as a "conversion" from Judaism to Christianity.[26] Stendahl says:

> Rather than being "converted," Paul was called to the specific task – made clear to him by his experience of the risen Lord – of apostleship to the Gentiles, one hand-picked through Jesus Christ on behalf of the one God of Jews and Gentiles.[27]

From Paul's letters and Acts, Stendahl observed that there exists a significant continuity between before and after Paul's experience of the risen Jesus, which Stendahl thought was a neglected aspect in previous scholarship. Differently from the evaluation by James, Stendahl says that Paul was not a person of a "plagued conscience," but of "robust consciousness,"[28] who did not considered his previous form of piety – Pharisaic Judaism – wrong or something to be discarded. Paul, even after he joined the Jesus movement, remained as a Jew who received a divine mission for the gentiles and now possessed a

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[24] Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 7. For a similar opinion, see Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986), 15; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 64; Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 2:100; Günther Bornkamm, *Paul* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971; repr., Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 13-15.

[25] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 11.

[26] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 7-11.

[27] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 7.

[28] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 13.

new understanding of the place of the gentiles.[29] Stendahl's analysis also differs from Nock who argued that Paul is a "convert" based on the descriptions in Acts.

Stendahl's study is significant in that he pointed out the continuity between before and after Paul's experience which previous scholarship often neglected. As I will illustrate in the following Chapter 2, Paul indeed understood his experience not as a "conversion" – whether it is defined as a switch of religion or sect – but as a "calling." His former religious identity and thoughts as a Pharisaic Jew remained intact, while they were seen with a new perspective and acquired fresh implications for his life.[30] I think that Paul's experience as described in Acts have qualities distinctive from those of the Hebrew prophets – which in modern retrospect comparable to other cases considered as "conversion" – but at least Paul himself did not perceive his experience as what some scholars call as a "conversion."

Differently from previous scholarship, Stendahl also acknowledged Acts as a Lukan literary creation, and gave more historical weight to Paul's letters. His analysis on Paul's experience is thus mostly based on Paul's undisputed letters, and Acts is used only in relation to Paul's comments in his letters. Stendahl, however, failed to appreciate The Lukan literary and conceptual effort in creating the notion of "Christian conversion" through Paul's case, by saying that Luke is following Paul's understanding of his

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[29] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 9, 19-23, 78-96; E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 443-44; Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 65 (1983), 95-122; *Jesus, Paul and the Law: studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 183-214 .

[30] See Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 9: "It thus becomes clear that the usual conversion model of Paul the Jew who gives up his former faith to become a Christian is not the model of Paul but of ours. Rather, his call brings him to a new understanding of his mission, a new understanding of the law which is otherwise an obstacle to the Gentiles. His ministry is based on the specific conviction that the Gentiles will become part of the people of God without having to pass through the law. This is Paul's secret revelation and knowledge."

experience as a "calling."[31] For instance, Stendahl notes that Luke uses the Hebrew prophetic tradition in all three accounts of Acts 9:15, 22:14-15, 26:16-18, similarly to Paul in his letters, and concludes that Luke understood and depicted Paul's experience as a "call" but not a "conversion."[32] While it is true that Luke closely connected Paul's "conversion" with his mission and used some of the prophetic languages, we should note that the relationship between Paul's "conversion" and "call" varies in the three accounts due to Luke's different emphases in narrating Paul's experience three times in Acts.[33] For instance, in Acts 9 Luke focuses more on presenting a vivid picture of Saul's radical turn to the Jesus movement, but relatively less on his gentile mission. Here it is only Ananias who learns about the divine plan concerning Saul. In Acts 26 on the other hand, Luke connects Paul's conversion and call more closely by making Paul himself receive the direct calling from the God. There are also additional literary elements that are not either from Paul's letters or the Hebrew prophetic tradition. For instance, Luke's stress on the radicality of Saul's change, motif of Saul's blindness, or his repentance, are not found in Paul's undisputed letters or prophetic writings. These observations make it difficult to say that Luke also understood Paul's experience primarily as a call. I think Stendahl, because of his stress on the continuity between Paul's and Luke's understanding, paid less attention to the discrepancies between Paul's letters and Acts, thus failing to see the different picture of Paul's experience in Acts.

Acknowledging the continuity between before and after Paul's experience of the risen Christ as Stendahl pointed out, but at the same time stressing the radicality of this experience, Beverly Roberts Gaventa came up with a new concept, "transformation," to understand Paul's experience. She first widened the definition of religious conversion as an experience of "personal change," which includes both emotional and cognitive aspects,

[31] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 9-10. Similarly, Lohfink, *The Conversion of St. Paul*, 100.

[32] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 9-10.

[33] See Section 2.1 for more discussion.

and presented three different types to understand the cases described in Paul's letters and Acts: "alternation," "pendulum-like conversion," and "transformation."[34] She says:

> There are, then, three categories of personal change of which we need to be aware in this study: alternation, conversion, and transformation. Alternation is a relatively limited form of change that develops from one's previous behavior; conversion is a radical change in which past affiliations are rejected for some new commitment and identity; transformation is also radical change, but one in which an altered perception reinterprets both present and past.[35]

These categories incorporate varying definitions of the previous scholarship. "Alternation" is similar to Nock's concept of "adhesion," when a person accepts a new religious idea and lifestyle in addition to one's former form of piety.[36] "Pendulum-like conversion" is what was understood as religious conversion by James and Nock, which is a complete turning away from one's past to accept a new religious system. In particular, Nock's concept of "genuine conversion" is somewhat similar to this type in that a person now considers the past as wrong and accepts a new form of piety as rejecting the past.[37] "Transformation," which Gaventa coins as a new concept, is a radical cognitive change that causes a person to reinterpret his/her past and present as a whole. According to Gaventa, "transformation" type of change does not require the person to negate his/her past completely like "pendulum-like" type, but to reinterpret it through the insights gained by the monumental religious experience.[38] With these categories, and her

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[34] Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 12. For the category of "alternation" that Gaventa uses here, see also Richard Travisano, "Alternation and Conversion as Qualitatively Different Transformations," in *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction,* ed. Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman (Waltham: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), 594-606.

[35] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 12.

[36] Nock, *Conversion*, 7.

[37] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 12; Nock, *Conversion*, 15.

[38] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 12.

acknowledgment of Acts as the Lukan literary creation that has to be read separately from Paul's letters, Gaventa argues that in Paul's letters we see Paul as having a "transformation" type change, while in Acts a "pendulum-like conversion."[39]

Gaventa's study is important in that she noticed the vast difference between Paul and Luke in their descriptions of Paul's encounter of the risen Christ, differently from previous scholars such as Stendahl. She in particular criticizes the harmonizing tendency that uncritically joins two accounts to reconstruct Paul's experience of the risen Christ, which in most times ends up identifying it as a "conversion."[40] By dealing with Paul and Luke separately, Gaventa correctly notes the discrepancies between Paul and Luke in interpreting Paul's experience. While Gaventa still stresses the radicality and abruptness in Paul's accounts to argue that Paul's experience was more than a "calling" but "transformation" – the point where I disagree with Gaventa – it is crucial that she noticed the gap between Paul and Luke.[41] She observed extensive Lukan literary hand in recreating Paul's experience as a "pendulum-type" change in Acts, differently from Paul's own understanding of the event as we see in his letters.[42]

While acknowledging the merit of Gaventa's analysis, I disagree with her on the three points below. First, I worry that Gaventa's category of "transformation" overly emphasizes the suddenness and radicality of Paul's change than what Paul seems to say in his letters. What we know from Paul's comments is that he had some sort of revelatory experience of Jesus, this event initiated the process of change that eventually made Paul

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[39] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 52-54. Gaventa criticizes the following studies: F. C. Baur, *Paul* (2nd ed.; 2 vols.; ed. Eduard Zeller; trans. A. Menzies; London: Williams & Norgate, 1875-76); Johannes Weiss, *History of Primitive Christianity* (ed. F. C. Grant; trans. F. C. Grant, *et al*.; New York: Wilson-Erikson, 1937), 186-94. I would also add Nock's work to this list since he does not distinguish between Luke's and Paul's descriptions on conversion.

[40] Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 17-19.

[41] Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 21-40. As I will discuss shortly, I disagree with Gaventa at this point of stressing the radicality of Paul's change.

[42] Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 52-92, esp., 52-54.

to change his attitude towards Jesus and the movement, and at the end, turned him from a persecutor to an apostle. Paul's letters, however, inform us that the identification of Jesus as the messiah, recognition of the mission for the gentiles, and the new understanding of the Jewish Law happened just as suddenly at his revelatory encounter. Paul's letters reveals that Paul's change was rather a gradual process which took at least two to three years (Gal. 1:16-19). Therefore, designating Paul's experience as "transformation" inevitably stresses the radicality and immediacy of the change, which in fact is the very aspect that we see Luke's descriptions of Paul's change but not in Paul's accounts.[43]

Second, I think Gaventa's three categories of religious change are too artificial, resulting in a misunderstanding of Luke's literary effort in Acts. Based on her categories, Gaventa says the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 and Cornelius in Acts 10 belong to the "alternation" type, while Paul in Acts 9 is a "pendulum-like" change.[44] By categorizing cases in Acts into her three categories, Gaventa argues that Luke does not present a unified concept of "Christian" conversion in Acts, but simply lists various cases of religious changes; she says: "Luke does not offer a concept or theory of conversion, but a changing portrait with certain constant features."[45] As I will argue in the following chapters, however, despite the variations in details Luke coherently describes the experiences of Jews and gentiles who join the church, as a cognitive change from previous misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the God and Jesus to the correct understanding and knowledge.[46] Paul's experience is also re-illustrated in Acts within this larger Lukan literary and theological scheme. I think Gaventa's use of typology

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[43] Craffert also assumes a "moment of change" in Paul's life to call Paul's change as a "conversion." Craffert, "Paul's Damascus Experience," 42.

[44] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 96-125, 147-49.

[45] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 147.

[46] For a similar critique on Gaventa that she overly emphasized the differences between the conversions of Saul and the others, see Philip H. Kern, "Paul's Conversion and Luke's Portrayal of Character in Acts 8-10," *Tyndale Bulletin* 54 (2003): 79.

forced her to read conversion episodes in Acts separately from each other, thus making it impossible to see the coherent thread in Luke's construction of "Christian conversion."

Finally, I do not agree with Gaventa that Paul is not a paradigmatic convert in Acts. She says:

> To say that Luke understands the conversion to be definitive of Paul is not to say that Luke understands Paul to be the prototypical or paradigmatic convert…Nothing in Luke's narrative suggests that other converts are to follow Paul's pattern or that Paul follows some Lukan pattern of conversion.[47]

In other words, she still holds out the option that Luke understood something personal and distinctive in Paul's case, i.e., a "genuine" transformation.

While I think that Paul is not the only model of Christian "conversion" in Acts, I disagree with Gaventa that Paul is not a paradigmatic convert or Luke does not present a pattern of conversion in Acts.[48] For one, Luke modifies Paul's experience by using similar literary motifs as used in other conversions of Jews and gentiles in Acts, such as the stress on the ignorance and lack of control before one's "conversion," presence of a guiding figure who reveals the true knowledge, immediacy of the response who realizes his/her true state, repentance, a convert soon becoming a guide for the others, etc. Luke also repeats Paul's "conversion" story three times, in Acts 9 between the conversions of the Jews/semi-Jews (Acts 8) and gentiles (Acts 10), in Acts 22 in relation to the Jews, and in Acts 26 in relation to the gentiles. Considering Luke's careful placement of Paul's story at literarily critical points in the narrative, it seems difficult to say that he includes Paul's story simply as one example of conversion in the early history of the church.

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[47] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 92.

[48] For an argument that Luke presents a paradigm of conversion in his Gospel, He observed that there is certain number of elements present in most conversion stories in the Gospel of Luke, and in totality of these elements are structured into a systematic pattern. See Méndez-Moratalla, *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke*, 217. Méndez-Moratalla however does not pinpoint Luke's stress on the cognitive aspect of conversion.

Gaventa's shortcoming seems to be resulting from her lack of consideration for the contemporary Hellenistic philosophical and Jewish discussions on one's radical change, thus failing to perceive recurring literary motifs being used to recast Paul as a model of Christian conversion.[49]

Similarly to Gaventa, Alan Segal emphasized the continuity in Paul's consciousness before and after his experience of the risen Jesus, but continued to apply the term "conversion" to Paul's own understanding of his experience because of the radicality of the event.[50] He first criticized the narrow definition of conversion as a change in one's religion, as assumed by Stendahl, since it cannot suitably explain the religious phenomena of the first century Mediterranean world.[51] He rather defines religious conversion as a "radical change in a person's experience" which can result in "moving from one sect or denomination to another within the same religion."[52] According to Segal, conversion does not necessarily require a denial of one's previous life, but it is a transformative experience that forces one to revalue everything else accordingly.[53] In conversion, old thoughts and identities can remain intact, but they are completely changed in significance through the imposition of a new paradigm. This understanding of conversion is similar to Gaventa's concept of "transformation" in that it emphasizes the continuity between one's before and after the conversion as well as the radicality of the experience; Gaventa, however, does not consider intra-sectarian conversion in this regard.

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[49] At the same time, using Paul's case as a conversion model corresponds to the tendency in the pastoral Epistles. For instance 1 Tim. 1:12-17 presents a reinterpreted version of Paul's conversion similarly as what Luke does for Paul in Acts. See Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1990), 18-19.

[50] For a similar argument, see Pieter F. Craffert, "Paul's Damascus Experience as Reflected in Galatians 1: Call or Conversion?" *Scriptura* 29 (1989), 36-47.

[51] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 5-6.

[52] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 6.

[53] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 75.

With this amended definition of religious conversion, Segal says that Paul was "called" for his mission but at the same time "converted" with respect to his religious experience.[54] He says:

> But the primary fact of Paul's personal experience as a Christian is his enormous transformation, his conversion from a persecutor of Christianity to a persecuted advocate of it. To read Paul properly, I maintain, one must recognize that Paul was a Pharisaic Jew who converted to a new apocalyptic, Jewish sect and then lived in a Hellenistic, gentile Christian community as a Jew among gentiles. Indeed, conversion is a decisive and deliberate change in religious community, even when the convert nominally affirms the same religion.[55]

Segal thus criticizes Stendahl for seeing Paul merely as a "called," because Paul's letters indicate that there was a "wrenching and decisive change of Paul's entrance to Christianity."[56] Although Paul did not apply the terminologies that he used for the gentile conversion for his own experience, Segal calls Paul a "convert" based on the radicality of Paul's experience that is different from a prophetic calling.[57]

One contribution of Segal's study is that he recognized the different purposes of Paul and Luke in recounting Paul's experience, that the accounts in Acts are primarily Lukan creation to develop a definition of Christian conversion.[58] According to Segal, Luke, based on the tradition of Paul's experience, dramatized Paul's experience and emphasized the immediacy between Paul's conversion and recognition of his mission.[59] I also agree with Segal that Luke is developing a coherent concept of Christian conversion

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[54] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 6.

[55] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 7-8.

[56] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 6, 12, 14.

[57] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 19-21.

[58] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 3. Segal went on to conjecture the developing concept of conversion in early Christian writings that began from Paul's letters, continued but developed in Acts, and further crystallized in later pastoral epistles. Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 12, 17, 72.

[59] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 4, 8, 10-11.

in Acts contrastingly to Gaventa's argument.[60] Segal's observation of the developing concept of conversion in Acts allows one to further ask what elements the author emphasizes or deemphasizes in rewriting Paul's story, and what other sources the author might be using in this literary process of constructing the concept of "Christian conversion" in Acts.

I diverge from Segal, however, in his application of the term "conversion" to identify Paul's experience. I understand that he continued to use "conversion" as an etic term for comparative studies with other similar phenomena identified as "conversion." It is true that Paul's experience exhibits some similar features with other conversion stories; however, I think there is more to lose than gain when we call Paul as a "convert" to the Jesus movement from Pharisaic Judaism.

The first thing to lose is that this term is fundamentally anachronistic as applied to Paul and to the Jesus movement in the first century.[61] As Segal has noted, Paul did not use the common terminologies used in Judaism and Hellenistic philosophical schools to describe the experience of those who newly join the groups, such as ἐπιστρέφω or μετάνοια, for himself.[62] For his own experiences, Paul rather uses languages from the Hebrew prophetic tradition as observed by many scholars. It is in Acts that we begin to see undiscriminating terms and motifs being used to describe both Paul and the other Jews and gentiles joining the Jesus movement. In addition, even if we use Segal's expanded definition of conversion as a transition not only between religions but sects within a religion, it is questionable whether Jesus movement was recognized, internally and externally, as an established sect within Judaism when Paul joined the movement. While the fact that Paul persecuted the church suggests that the movement was

[60] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 17.

[61] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 11; Paula Fredriksen, "Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective Self," *JTS* 37 (1986), 15-16.

[62] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 20.

recognized as a force detrimental to the Jewish ancestral tradition, this does not suggest that it was established or recognized as a "fixed" sect within Judaism.[63] At the same time, we have no evidence that the shift between Jewish sects was considered as so radical and immediate as to be equated with the modern notion of "conversion" as Segal suggests. It thus seems anachronistic to say that Paul left his former Pharisaic sect to join a new "sect" of Jesus followers. It is not until Acts that Paul became a Christian "convert" in the early Christian literary tradition through Luke's attempt to crystallize the concept of "Christian conversion" and make Paul to be one of the models.

I also hesitate to call Paul a "convert" because it blurs the distance between Paul's letters and Acts in interpreting Paul's experience, and makes it difficult to see the distinctive Lukan literary and conceptual effort to make Paul a paradigmatic "convert" and to construct a concept of Christian "conversion" through his case. The same critique on Gaventa can be reiterated here: in order to term Paul's experience as a "conversion," Segal overemphasized its radicality to the degree that it seems to have happened within a fairly short period of time. It is true that Paul's encounter of the risen Christ initiated an array of changes, but as noted above, from Paul's letters we learn that Paul's change required several years and not as immediate as Luke depicts. At the same time, while it is true that many of Paul's idea as a Pharisaic Jew underwent new interpretations, from Paul's letters we see most of his former values, such as his lifestyle as a Jew, the priority of Jewish people in salvation, and the importance of Jewish law, remained intact. While Segal also acknowledged this continuity, by calling Paul a "convert" he inevitably emphasizes the radicality and immediacy of the change, and thus makes it difficult to see

[63] Segal says that Paul himself was unaware of leaving Judaism when he joined the Jesus movement, but it indeed is a radical "conversion." Segal assumes the Jesus movement as a "fixed" sect as saying: "…he [Paul] decided against following his previous sect of Pharisaism in favor of a new sect of Judaism that he had previously regarded as heretical." Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1986), 104.

the majority of his ideas remaining the same as before. Here the Lukan effort to dramatize the contrast between Paul's before and after the event becomes faint.[64]

Finally, I do not agree with Segal that Luke saw Paul's experience basically as an ecstatic conversion, and made this kind as the model for other gentile conversions in Acts.[65] Segal says:

> Luke's model reflects an evolved definition of conversion within the church, a model for many converts to follow. For Luke, Paul's ecstatic conversion on the road to Damascus is the first of a large number of ecstatic conversions.[66]

For this argument, Segal does not present detailed evidences how Luke is depicting Paul's experience as an ecstatic conversion. As I will show in this paper, Luke makes Paul's encounter of the risen Christ primarily as a cognitive event that corrected Paul's misconception of Jesus. Paul, as Segal suggests, may have understood his experience in relation to the Jewish mystical tradition, but not Luke. Luke twists the mystical experience of Paul into a cognitive one by using contemporary Hellenistic Jewish dialogues on the gentile conversions and Greek philosophical discourses one's radical cognitive shift to join the Judaism or accept a new philosophical teaching.

In sum, I think it is problematic to identify Paul's experience as depicted in his letters as "conversion" or "transformation" to the Jesus movement. It overemphasizes the radicality and immediacy of Paul's experience than Paul himself understood, and it is also anachronistic to be applied to the first century Jesus movement. By designating Paul's experience as "conversion" or "transformation," moreover, the distinctiveness between

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[64] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 7. Segal thus gives too much continuity between Paul's and Luke's understandings and depictions of Saul's experience. He says: "When scholars emphasize Paul's description of himself as a prophet in contrast to Luke's description, they ironically are being unduly influenced by Luke's description, for Luke equally intended Paul's conversion to be understood as a prophetic call."

[65] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 18-9.

[66] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 17.

Paul's own understanding and Luke's reinterpretation is blurred. In the following chapters, I will show that it is Luke who rewrites Paul's experience as something similar to the radical philosophical shift presented in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish writings. Luke referred to these contemporary discourses to construct the concept of "Christian conversion" that both Jews and gentiles can follow, and Paul, a faithful Jew and also an apostle for the gentiles, was a perfect model for this purpose.

1.2. Methodology and the Progress of the Paper

This paper attempts to understand the Lukan conceptual and literary effort in describing Paul's experience of the risen Christ as a definite case of "Christian conversion" in Acts. I also ask the nature of "conversion" Luke is constructing through his reinterpretation of Paul's experience in Acts. For this analysis, I place Acts within the larger literary context of the ancient Mediterranean world, and read it in conjunction with the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish discourses on one's radical philosophical and/or religious conversion. This is an essentially comparative task that requires an adequate methodology to deal with the similarities and differences that are found between the texts from distinctive locales, times, and with their own literary and theological agendas.

In their study of the proper methodology for understanding the "parallels" observed between the New Testament writers and their antecedents and contemporaries from the Hellenistic world, L. Michael White and John T. Fitzgerald introduced the notion of "semantic fields."[67] A "semantic field" denotes a cluster of words and concepts concerning a particular subject, which functions in relation to the social conventions and

[67] L. Michael White and John T. Fitzgerald, "Quod est Comparandum: The Problem of Parallels," in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (eds., John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht, and L. Michael White; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 19, 31.

cultural ideals.[68] A "semantic field" is a rather flexible linguistic horizon that is not restricted to the instances of verbal identity of similarity but includes the conceptual similarities as well. Consideration of the semantic field allows one to ask how the terms or concepts within a certain "semantic field" can be "invested with theological colorations, legitimations, or motivations by different pagan, Jewish, and Christian authors," and not the direct literary dependence between the texts.[70]

In my analysis on Paul's letters, Acts, and other Hellenistic writings, I place the "semantic field" of one's radical philosophical transformation to understand the overlapping themes and terminologies in the texts. With this methodology, I can observe similarities beyond the explicit verbal agreements but those between concepts, characters, and overall plot of the writings. I can also understand the differences in consideration of each author's own literary and theological interest, especially how and why Luke changed or incorporated certain elements in his description of Paul's "conversion." Due to the limit of sources and space, I only utilized the literary works of the ancient writers roughly contemporaneous to Acts and limited the number of sources.

In the following Chapter 2, I analyze the Lukan literary efforts in representing Paul's experience of the risen Christ as a radical transformation, i.e., a "conversion." In 2.1, I first show that Luke used Paul's letters consciously in writing Acts, the basis upon which I can delineate distinctive Lukan efforts in describing Paul's experience in Acts 9, 22, and 26. In the following 2.2, I analyze Paul's own descriptions of his change in his letters, and argue that Paul understood and presented his experience as a prophetic calling following the Hebrew prophetic tradition. Paul also distinguished his experience from the experience of his gentile believers who went through "conversions." In 2.3, differently from Paul, it will be shown that Luke dramatized Paul's experience of the risen Christ as to make it an immediate and radical transformation which resembles the experience of

[68] White and Fitzgerald, "The Problem of Parallels," 28-29.
[70] White and Fitzgerald, "The Problem of Parallels," 28-29.

the others who newly joined the Jesus movement. Luke shared and noted Paul's understanding of his experience as a calling, but recasted him as a model of "Christian conversion" in Acts.

In Chapter 3, I focus on understanding the meanings of the motifs of Saul's blindness and transition from darkness to light that Luke used in describing Paul's "conversion." In 3.1, I analyze this motif in the immediate narrative context of Acts 9, 22, and 26. Despite the differences in details, Luke consistently uses this motif to depict the conversions of Paul and others. In particular, it seems that Luke, by deliberately transposing this motif from Paul in Acts 9 and 22 to the general "Christian" conversion in Acts 26, identifies Paul's experience clearly with that of the gentiles. In 3.2, I discuss the previous scholarship on Saul's blindness, and argue that understanding this motif in the context of the Hebrew prophetic calling or divine punishment fails to consider the larger narratological context of Saul's experience in Acts. To better understand this motif, we need to see ancient texts contemporaneous to Acts and discuss a person's radical religious/philosophical transformation. Finally in 3.3, I look into the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish texts that describe such a radical transition, and how the motifs of blindness, light, darkness, and sight are being used in relation to it. Through this analysis, I show that Luke reinterprets Paul's experience as a radical cognitive shift to a new philosophical teaching.

In Chapter 4, I focus on another literary element of "repentance" that Luke consistently uses to describe Paul's "conversion." In 4.1, I first analyze this concept in Acts 9, 22, and 26 and show that it is Luke who makes Paul to "repent" in his experience of the risen Christ. In 4.2, I analyze Luke's use of the notion of repentance throughout Acts and place Saul's repentance in the larger narratological context of Acts. Compared to the use of repentance in other gospels and Paul's letters, Luke is distinctive in stressing the cognitive aspect of this notion and presents it as the primary step for those newly joining the church. Lukan distinctiveness allows us to consider the wider literary tradition

in the Hellenistic world to understand his use of repentance. In 4.3, I discuss the function and meaning of Saul's repentance by referring to the Hellenistic Greek and Jewish discussions on one's radical religious/philosophical shift with the notion of repentance. Similarly to Acts, these texts stress the cognitive aspect of repentance, i.e., a drastic change in thinking that the former thoughts and opinions were wrong upon the revelation of true knowledge. Together with the motif of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight I discussed in Chapter 3, repentance in Lukan description of Saul's change again constructs the concept of "Christian conversion" primarily as a radical cognitive shift. Saul is a convert like other Jews and gentiles, who experienced a radical transformation in his thinking, was released from his ignorance, and changed his lifestyle accordingly.

Through these analyses, I argue that it is not Paul but Luke who understood and presented Paul's experience of the risen Christ to the ancient and modern readers as a radical cognitive transformation that can be termed as a "conversion." By describing Paul's experience with the motifs commonly used in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish writings on one's philosophical transformation, Luke depicts Paul's and "Christian conversion" in general primarily as a philosophical turn.[71]

In this paper, I use the term "conversion" to denote a radical transformation that requires a person to completely sever from his/her past to join a new religious or philosophical community. When applied to Paul, "conversion" is contrasted to "calling" in that the former emphasizes the radical sever from his Pharisaic past as the essential element in Paul's experience. In the Hellenistic philosophical and Jewish writings we

[71] The following scholars presented the similar opinion, but not with special concentration on Luke's description of Paul's "conversion." See Johannes Weiss, *Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30-150* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959; orig. German pub., 1914), 233-57; Nock, *Conversion*, 14, 164-86; W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1972), 10; Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds to Early Christianity* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 332.

observe the cases of radical transformation and in particular, that these texts often depict them as a "radical cognitive shift/transformation/turn," i.e., a dramatic change in one's thinking upon the revelation of a new philosophical teaching.[72] These texts utilize the similar terms and concepts with twists that suit their different literary and theological agendas.

[72] Cf. On the stories of changes that can be termed as "conversions" in ancient literature, see Plutarch, *Mor.* 434.45D-F; Horace, *Odes*. 1.34; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.574-698; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.1-30; 1 Macc. 1:10-15, 41-50; 2:15-22; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 2.6.48; 4.3.16-18; Lucian, *Double Indictment 17*; Lucian, *Nigrinus* 1-5; Aulus Gellus, *Attic Nights* 3.13.1-5; 5.3.1-7; Jdt. 5:17-21; 6:2-8; 14:6-10; *Joseph and Aseneth*, *Testament of Job* 2-5; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.9.1; 20.2.1; 20.2.3-4; *Apocalypse of Abraham* 107; Act*s of Peter* 4.23-29; *Acts of Paul* 1-2, 6; *Act of John* 63-81; *Acts of Thomas* 51-59. See Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 96-99 for a fuller list and explanation.

Chapter 2. The Lukan Literary Effort to Make Paul a "Convert"

2.1. Luke's Sources in Writing Acts

The principal sources used by Luke, at least according to most New Testament scholars, include the LXX, the Gospel of Mark, Q, a collection of Paul's letters, and some of the writings of Josephus.[73] In particular, scholars debate whether Luke knew Paul's letters or just relied on the general Pauline tradition when he wrote Luke-Acts.[74] For instance, W. G. Kümmel says that Luke could not have known Paul's letters, since if he had known them, he surely would have referenced to them directly in Acts.[75] We see no indication in Acts that Paul wrote any kind of letters or quotations from his letters, even though Luke cites some letters attributed to others.[76] Based on these observations, Kümmel concludes that it is unlikely that Luke knew Paul's letters. Scholars of this position also point out that Acts does not include important events mentioned in Paul's letters,[77] and the portrayal of Paul in Acts differs significantly from what we see in his

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[73] Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 12; *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2006), 29-49; Norman A. Beck, "The Lukan Writer's Stories about the Call of Paul," *SBL Seminar Papers* 214 (1983): 213-14.

[74] Here 'tradition' refers to the written sources, oral tradition, and general information about Paul which Luke had access to. Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 7-8. For similar arguments, see C. L. Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 216; *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of Letters* (London: Epworth, 1955), 24-28; Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of the Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 66; Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 245.

[75] W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 186.

[76] Acts 15:23b-29; 23:26-30.

[77] Noticeable omissions include the story of Onesimus (Philemon), Paul's sufferings (2 Cor. 11:23-33; 1 Cor. 15:32), the confrontation with Cephas in Antioch (Gal.

own letters.[78] For this position, scholars often assume an earlier date for the composition of Luke-Acts. For instance, C. K. Barrett assumes Acts to be written before the pseudo-Pauline letters such as the *Letter to the Ephesians* and the *Letter to the Colossians*, which makes it difficult to think that Luke knew any of Paul's letters.[79] Some, such as Harnack, Martin Hengel and Raymond Brown, even suggest the possibility that Luke indeed was a traveling companion of Paul who belonged to the second generation of the church.[80]

2:11-14), Titus' circumcision, etc. See T. von Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1909), 119-21. Concerning the different portrayal of Paul, see E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 112-16; P. Vielhauer, "On the "Paulinism" of Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert*, edited by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 33-50; Lüdemann says that if Luke had referred to 2 Cor. 11 to describe Paul's escape from Damascus for Acts 9, there is no good reason for Luke to omit Paul's next passage on a person who had a journey to the heaven. Lüdemann concludes: "The question, therefore, is whether the evidence is not explained better, as was already evident at individual points, by the hypothesis that Luke used traditions from the Pauline mission territories, individual items in which may have come from reading the letters." Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 8.

[78] In fact, the discrepancy in the depictions of Paul in his own letters and Acts can be the result of Lukan literary effort and not a proof that Luke did not know Paul's letters.

[79] C. K. Barrett, "Acts and the Pauline Corpus," *ExpTim* 78 (1976-77): 2-5. Barrett says that Paul's letters were not yet canonized to be read and recited when Luke wrote his works, thus it is highly unlikely that Luke knew Paul's letters. He says that Luke based his story upon the 'We-document' and other traditions, and thus Acts reflects Luke's own non-Pauline theology. For a further discussion on dating Acts, see Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 4, 359-63. Cf. Adolph Harnack, *Neue Untersuchungen zur Apostelgeschichte* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911), 64-65.

[80] Harnack, *The Acts*, 162-63. Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 3: "That makes it all the more striking that Acts says nothing of Paul the letter-writer. In my view this presupposes a relatively early date for Acts, when there was still a vivid memory of Paul the missionary, but the letter-writer was not known in the same way;" Raymond Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 274.

On the other hand, traditionally the Tübingen School and many other scholars assume that Luke knew some of Paul's letters.[81] For instance, John Knox argues that since Luke belonged to the third generation of the Jesus movement and to the circle of Pauline tradition, it is almost impossible that he did not know Paul's letters either in a written or oral form.[82] Similarly, William O. Walker notes that Luke, even if he did not have Paul's letters at hand, surely would have known about the existence of Paul's letters and could have tracked down some of them to write Acts.[83] Considering the recent scholarly consensus on the relatively later date of Acts to late first or early second century CE, it seems legitimate to claim that Luke did know the existence of the epistles and could come into contact with at least some of them.[84] Moreover, these scholars observed multiple verbal and thematic parallels between Acts and Paul's letters that are best explained by Luke using some of Paul's letters.[85]

If Luke had access to at least some of Paul's letters, the question remains whether he used them in writing Acts and if so, to what extent. Knox, citing "the absence of

[81] Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 51-55; Cf. William M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen* (London: Hoddor and Stoughton, 1897), 385; Lars Aejimelaeus, *Die Rezeption der Paulusbriefe in der Miletrede* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1987); W. Schenk, "Luke as a Reader of Paul: Observations on his Reception," in *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings*, edited by FS Bas van Iersel, Sipke Draisma (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1989), 127-39; H. Leppä, *Luke's Critical Use of Galatians* (Vantaa: Dark Oy, 2002), esp. 28-32.

[82] John Knox, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," in Keck and Martyn, *Studies in Luke-Acts*, 279-89, esp. 282-3. See also M. S. Enslin, "Once Again, Luke and Paul," *ZNW* 61 (1970): 84.

[83] William O. Walker, "Acts and the Pauline Corpus Reconsidered," *JSNT* 24 (1985): 5; Enslin, "Once Again," 257; Knox, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," 282-3; Andreas Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1979), 65.

[84] Pervo, *Acts*, 5, 12; *Dating Acts*, 49. Here Pervo says: "…I seek to demonstrate that Luke operated from a Deutero-Pauline perspective: i.e., his views of Paul belong to the reception and reinterpretation of Paul's thought that emerged in the final decade of the first century and the opening two decades of the second."

[85] See note 77 for the examples.

adequate evidence of verbal dependence," argued that Luke *intentionally* refrained from using Paul's letters because they too often reflected conflicts, and thus were not suitable for Luke's own purpose of creating a harmonious history of the early church.[86] M. S. Enslin, while admitting that "the evidence is very fragmentary," still argued that Luke made occasional use of Paul's letters.[87] For one example, Enslin thinks that Lk. 24:34, "They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" can be best explained by Luke making use of 1 Cor. 15:5 where Paul mentions about the appearance of the risen Christ. Another example is Paul's change in the route from Corinth to Jerusalem in Acts 20:3, which Enslin considers as Luke's rather cursory use of 2 Cor. 1:15-2:12 and Rom. 15:31.[88] At the end, however, Enslin remained in the position that Luke used some facts and concepts from Paul's letters but not with a thorough understanding of Paul's theology.

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[86] Knox, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," 281-86. Knox also argued that Luke avoided direct reference to Paul's letters because his letters were misappropriated by 'pre-Marcionites.' Luke instead tried to represent Paul as the great apostle inheriting the apostolic and emerging 'orthodox' tradition, and it was not a good strategy to use Paul's letters as other misusers were doing at that time. For similar opinions, see Walker, "Acts and the Pauline Corpus," 6-7; Enslin, "Once Again," 268-9; C. H. Talbert, *Luke and the Gnostics: An Examination of the Lucan Purpose* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 88; Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 55-57.

[87] Enslin, "Once Again," 267.

[88] Other examples include: both Paul and Luke use the rather unusual term πορθέω ("to destroy") to describe Paul's former life as a persecutor in Gal. 1:13 and Acts 9:21; the unconventional idea that the law was given through the intermediary angels, as expressed in Gal. 3:19-20, is put on the mouth of Peter in Acts 7:53; similarities in the places and sequence of Paul's activities; verbal parallels in reporting Paul's escape from Damascus in 2 Cor. 11 and Acts 9; agreement in the names of Paul's colleagues; similar phrase "ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων" in Gal. 1:14 and Acts 22:3; the verbal similarity between Gal. 2:10 and Acts 11:30 to refer to the sending of aid; 1 Cor. 7:32-35 and Lk. 10:40-42 in referring to the advantage of freedom from all cares, etc. See Enslin, ""Luke" and Paul," 87-89; "Once Again," 262-63; Walker, "Acts and the Pauline Corpus," 12-14; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 7; Cf. Andreas Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: 1979), 65.

Recently, scholars such as Walker, Richard Pervo, and White have successfully shown that Luke did not use Paul's letters unconsciously or randomly, but used them with purpose as to choose, opt out, and retroject some of Paul's ideas to achieve the own agenda of Acts. Walker presents two examples of significant verbal, structural, and substantive similarities between Paul's letters and Acts which suggest some type of conscious literary adaptation.[89] The first example is that Luke altered the version of Paul's reference to the question of the circumcision of Titus (Gal. 2:3-5) to that of Timothy (Acts 16:1-3).[90] He conjectures that this redaction results from Luke's generally irenic perspective of early church, since Titus in Paul's letters was often associated with the apostle's controversial aspects and events, such as the collection of the Jerusalem Church and problematic situation at Corinth.[91] There also exists a parallel between Acts 15 and Galatians 2, where Walker argues that Luke intentionally moves Paul's words as described in his letters to Peter's lips so as to make Paul and his gentile mission standing in the same apostolic tradition of Peter.[92] For instance, while Paul claims in Gal. 2:7-9 that he "had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised," in Acts 15:7 Peter says that God has chosen him so that he "should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers." Similarly, as Paul says in Gal. 2:16 that "a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith of Jesus Christ," in Acts 15:11 Luke makes Peter to utter this theology: "we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." From these cases, Walker concludes that Acts shows Luke's conscious use of Paul's letters and his theology for

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[89] W. O. Walker, "The Timothy-Titus Problem Reconsidered," *ExpTim* 92 (1980-1): 233.

[90] Walker, "The Timothy-Titus," 231-35.

[91] Walker, "The Timothy-Titus," 232-33. Cf. 2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5-15; 8:6, 16-23; 12:17-18.

[92] Walker, "Acts and the Pauline Corpus," 12.

Luke's own agenda, which is to legitimatize Paul as the successor to Peter in the ministry for the gentiles.[93]

Similarly, Pervo, with his detailed comparison between the passages from Paul's letters and Acts, showed that Luke consciously utilized Paul's letters and also revised them for his own construction of the early history of the church.[94] For instance, Pervo analyzed Gal. 1:13-14, 23 and Acts 9:21; 22:3 where each author describes Paul's former life as a persecutor of the church.[95] He first points out the use of unusual term πορθέω in both texts – although in different forms – to depict Saul as a zealous persecutor. This term only occurs in Acts 9:21 and Gal. 1:13, 23 in the New Testament, all to depict specifically Paul's persecution of the Jesus movement. This observation allows Pervo to conjecture that Luke was using Paul's letters in depicting the persecutor Saul.[96] He further notes that Luke expanded his description to highlight the atrocities of the "pre-conversion" Paul by taking the term πορθέω in its root sense of "to plunder" and making Paul as "dragging off both men and women (εἰσπορευόμενος, σύρων τε ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας; Acts 8:3)" from houses and committing them to prison.[97]

In his analysis on the construction of the Pentecost event in Acts 2, White has shown that Acts 2 is the Lukan literary creation with its own theological agenda within

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[93] For other parallels, see Walker, "Acts and the Pauline Corpus," 11-12. Weizsäcker comments that Luke makes Peter to "utter the same opinions about law and gospel as Paul, according to the epistle, expressed in Antioch." K. H. von Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church* (New York: Putnam, 1894-5), Vol. I, 211. Concerning this Lukan *Tendenz*, see also L. Michael White, "The Pentecost Event: Lukan Redaction and Themes in Acts 2," *Forum* 3 (2000): 88.

[94] Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 52, 55.

[95] Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 73-76.

[96] Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 75; Enslin, "Once Again," 262; Leppä, *Luke's Critical Use*, 40-44.

[97] Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 75-76. Other examples which indicate that Luke used Paul's letters in describing Paul's conversion include Acts 9:20 and Gal. 1:16, Acts 22:3 and Gal. 1:14.

the overall scheme of Luke-Acts.[98] He rightly criticized Lüdemann who limited Lukan redactional activities and attributed the remaining elements to the hypothetical "historical tradition," thus failed to see the Lukan literary effort to create narrative and thematic connections throughout Luke-Acts.[99] White, on the other hand, observed numerous parallels throughout Luke-Acts that indicate Luke's conscious thematic interest in using his sources. For instance, there are connections between the Cornelius episode in Acts 10 (cf. 10:36, 38), the spread of the gospel message in Acts 1:4-8, the Rejection at Nazareth in Lk. 4:14-30, and the passion of the messiah in Lk. 24:46-48, all as revolving around Isa. 61:1-2 passage on the oppressed gentiles experiencing "release (ἄφεσις)" through the coming of the messiah (Acts 10:43; Lk. 4:18; 24:47; Cf. Acts 2:38) and the "acceptable (δεκτός)" year of the Lord (Acts 10:35; Lk. 4:19).[100] White particularly notes that here the term "acceptable (δεκτός)," which only occurs in Luke-Acts and Paul's letters, was also used in 2 Cor. 6:2 in connection to Isa. 49:8, a passage thematically linked to Isa. 61:1-2.[101] Another prominent Lukan redaction is to place the Pentecost event in Jerusalem (Acts 1:12-14), which White argued to be Luke's creation by using Paul's oral tradition of the passion and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-8), and his reference of his visit to Jerusalem after his encounter with the risen Christ (Gal. 1:18-24).[102] This Lukan redactional tendency is also reflected in Lk. 24:44-49, where Jesus says that the

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[98] White, "The Pentecost Event," 75-103.

[99] White, "The Pentecost Event," 85. White criticizes Lüdemann by describing how he limited the Lukan redactions to either distinctively Lukan vocabulary and style, direct allusions to specific materials in the Gospel of Luke, or framing narratives.

[100] White, "The Pentecost Event," 86-7. Also see Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 2: 138-41.

[101] White, "The Pentecost Event," 86, esp. n43. I will introduce his other examples in the following discussion where they are relevant. These include Luke's use of the term "blind," "pricked in heart," and "hardened."

[102] White, "The Pentecost Event," 100-101; Cf. Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 48-449.

proclamation of "the repentance for the forgiveness/remission of sins" will begin from Jerusalem. With these examples, White showed that Luke creatively used his sources and Paul's letters in particular, as retrojecting some of Paul's themes and theology in Luke-Acts. White concludes:

> Luke combines Markan and Q motifs from the Jesus narrative with Pauline theological elements and oral traditions and a thoroughgoing knowledge of the LXX language all worked together into a peculiarly Lukan narrative. Parallels and thematic motifs are worked forward and backward in the narrative to create continuity and undergird the historiographical and theological agenda. In particular, Pauline features are retrojected to the very beginnings of the story (of Jesus and the Church) so that the natural progression to Pauline Christianity becomes the only logical course, and, of course, the "will of God." The result is Luke's unique, and yet distinctively Pauline, description of the beginnings of the Christian movement.[103]

As I will show in the following discussion, this is precisely what Luke is doing in narrating Paul's encounter of the risen Christ in Acts 9, 22, and 26. Luke combines his sources, mainly the LXX and Paul's comments on his revelatory experiences in his letters, and links the idea of gentile conversion directly to Paul's "conversion" experience. More than that, Luke seems to incorporate the contemporary Hellenistic and Jewish philosophical discussions on one's radical transformation to depict Paul's experience, as emphasizing the radicality of his change and using the motifs of transition from darkness to light and repentance to characterize the paradigmatic "conversion" of the early church. Through these literary efforts, Luke reclaims Paul as one of the "converts" to the Jesus movement who experienced a radical rupture between his past and present, turned from darkness to light, and received remittance of his sins. Through Paul's case, we are able to see Luke's literary and conceptual effort to construct the ideal notion of "Christian conversion" in Acts, which is primarily a radical cognitive shift upon the revelation of the gospel. In other words, Luke characterizes "Christian conversion" as a philosophical turn

[103] White, "The Pentecost Event," 102.

for his potential audience in the Roman Empire. In the following section, I will first analyze Paul's descriptions of his change and revelatory experiences in his letters (2.2), and compare it with Luke's general description of Paul's change in Acts 9, 22, and 26 (2.3).

2.2. Paul's Descriptions of His Encounter with the Risen Christ

To clarify the Lukan literary hands in depicting Paul's "conversion," I first analyze Paul's descriptions on his change in his letters. In his undisputed letters, Paul makes only a few references to his change.[104] Explicit references are found in Gal. 1:11-19 and 1 Cor. 15:1-11.[105] From these passages, we are informed that Paul had one or more revelatory experiences which eventually caused him to join the Jesus movement and work for the gentile mission. He also mentions his former life as a persecutor of the church, but without explaining the reason for his persecution or the degree of severity. Other than these facts, there is not as much detail as in Acts.[106]

In Gal. 1:11-19, Paul brings up his revelatory experience to assert the divine origin of his gospel and the apostleship.[107]

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[104] Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 17; Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 3.

[105] As we shall see, it is not certain whether both texts are clearly about Paul's first encounter of the risen Christ. Another passage that is often considered as describing Paul's revelatory experience is 2 Cor. 12:1-9, although this passage seems to be dealing with another revelatory experience distinctive from Paul's initial encounter with the risen Christ. For reading this passage as Paul's own revelatory experience, see Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 35-7; William Baird, "Visions, Revelations, and Ministry: Reflections on 2 Cor. 12:1-5 and Gal. 1:11-17," *JBL* 104 (1985), 651-52; John Knox, "'Fourteen Years Later': A Note on the Pauline Chronology," *JR* 16 (1936): 341-49; "The Pauline Chronology," *JBL* 58 (1939): 15-29.

[106] Howard Clark Kee, "The Conversion of Paul: Confrontation or Interiority?" in The Other Side of God: A Polarity in World Religions (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1981): 54.

[107] Pervo, *Acts*, 63; Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 24. 1 Cor. 9:1 seems to be referring to the experience in 1 Cor. 15:1-11 as Paul uses the same verb. Lüdemman,

> 11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; 12 for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ (δι᾽ ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). 13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the Church of God and ravaging it. 14 I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. 15 But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased (Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν [ὁ θεὸς] ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ) 16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles (ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν), I did not confer with any human being, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus. 18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; 19 but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother.

In 1 Cor. 15:1-11, Paul asserts the facticity of the resurrection of Jesus by recounting his personal experience of the risen Christ.[108]

> 1 Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, 2 through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you-- unless you have come to believe in vain. 3 For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4 and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5 and that he appeared (ὤφθη) to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared (ὤφθη) to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7 Then he appeared (ὤφθη) to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me (ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερεὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὤφθη κἀμοί). 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God (Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ

Early Christianity, 114. The English translation of the Greek New Testament is mine, based on but modifying the translation in *Novum Testamentum Graece 28th Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013).

[108] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 257.

> ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ). 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them-- though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

In these two accounts, Paul describes his experiences which caused him to change his attitude towards the Jesus movement and eventually realize his mission for the gentiles. It is important to note, however, that it remains unclear whether the two passages of Gal. 1:1-11 and 1 Cor. 11:1-15 are describing a single event which immediately changed Paul from a persecutor to an apostle and also made him realize his gentile mission. While they share similar elements such as the description of Paul's former life as a persecutor, a divinely initiated experience that changed Paul's attitude towards Jesus, and Paul's present status as an apostle of Jesus, discrepancies in detail are prominent as to suggest that Paul is not necessarily depicting a single moment in these two passages.

The first thing to note is that Paul uses different terms to describe each experience. In Gal. 1.12 and 16, he uses the term "revelation (ἀποκάλυψις)" and "to reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι)," whereas in 1 Cor. 9:1 and 15:8 he uses "to see, apprehend (ὁράω)," once in active and once passive.[109] In Paul's letters, the term "revelation" as used in Gal. 1.12 and 16 can mean many different things, and does not necessarily require optical elements.[110] The experience described in Gal. 1:1-11 thus can mean any kind of

[109] Betz, *Galatians*, 71. 1 Cor. 9:1 "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? (οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑόρακα) Are you not my work in the Lord?"

[110] Gaventa notes that Paul uses the term "revelation" generally in relation to the eschaton (Rom. 2:5; 8:18, 19; 16:25; 1 Cor. 1:7; 3:13; Gal. 3:23). From this observation, she suggests that the description in Gal. 1:1-11 is not about a private event but about "God's revelation and the attack of that revelation upon Paul's prior life" in general, which should be placed within the larger revelatory scheme of the end time. Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 23. Some scholars interpret Paul's experience in Gal. 1:1-11 within the Jewish mystical tradition, especially in consideration of the phrase "in me (ἐν ἐμοί)" in v. 16. Richard Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen nach ihren*

experience of the divine, and perhaps more than once. On the other hand, the term "to see" in 1 Cor. 9:1 seems to suggest an experience involving some external visionary elements. Paul here uses the same term to describe the experiences of the apostles, which in early Christian tradition often denoted the divine epiphany that involved visionary encounter of the risen Christ.[111] Paul's use of different terms ἀποκαλύψαι and ὤφθη suggests that he might be addressing different experiences in two texts, while the one described in Galatians can include the experience in 1 Corinthians as the initial encounter with the risen Christ.

From these passages, the immediate connection between Paul's experience(s) and the inauguration of his mission as an apostle also remains unclear. Concerning the Galatians passage, scholars point out that Paul's description here does not suggest a onetime event but involves multiple revelatory experiences that eventually made Paul to understand fully his initial encounter with the risen Christ, the identity of Jesus as the messiah, and the gentile mission assigned specifically for Paul.[112] In Gal. 1:16, Paul

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Grundgedanken und Wirkungen (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1927), 371; Béda Rigaux, *Letters of Saint Paul* (ed. and trans. Stephen Yonic; Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1968), 51-55. Cf. Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of St. Paul* (London: A. and C. Black, 1931); Christopher RA Morray-Jones, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor. 12: 1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate: Part 2: Paul's Heavenly Ascent and its Significance," *HTR* 86 (1993): 265-92. On the contrary, Betz argues that "in me" does not necessarily denote mystical element since this phrase appears in different contexts in Paul's letters. Betz, *Galatians,* 71. See Gal. 2:20; 4:6; Rom. 8:9, 11, 15; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16.

[111] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians,* 256-7. Cf. Mk. 9:4; Lk. 24:34; Acts 2:3; 9:17; 13:31; 26:16; Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, *Die Auferstehung Jesu: Form, Art und Sinn der Urchristlichen Osterbotschft* (Witten-Ruhr: Luther Verlag, 1954), 117-27. Historically the status of Peter and other founding apostles were built up upon their visionary experience of the risen Christ. See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians,* 256-57, esp. n76.

[112] Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 23; From Paul's letters we know that he had more than one revelatory experiences. For instance, In Gal. 2:2, Paul says that he made another trip to Jerusalem after his another revelatory experience. Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 36-37.

notes that the revelation of Jesus Christ was for his mission, but here the purpose clause beginning with ἵνα does not necessarily indicate that his realization happened at the moment of his revelatory experience.[113] Also in Gal. 1:16-19 Paul notes that several years had passed between his experience and recognition of his gentile mission.[114] It seems that Paul, during these years of solitude and contemplation, eventually gained a fuller understanding of his revelatory experience(s) especially in relation to his gentile mission. 1 Cor. 15:1-11 is more ambiguous about the link between Paul's encounter of the risen Christ, joining of the Jesus movement, and recognition of the mission. Paul notes his past life as a persecutor and his change to an apostle, but there is no explicit chronological link between these facts.[115]

The fact that Paul's own comments do not necessarily describe one single event that immediately changed his attitude towards Jesus movement and revealed him his gentile mission, makes it difficult to know how quickly Paul joined the Christian community and how closely should we relate Paul's initial experience and the outset of his gentile ministry. This ambiguity on the radicality of Paul's change is in stark contrast to Luke's description of Paul's encounter of the risen Jesus as the single event that instantly changed Paul and made him to realize his mission for the gentiles in a fairly short time (Acts 9:15, 19-20; 22:21; 26:17-18).[116]

The second observation that we gain from Paul's letters is that Paul understood his experience as a calling within the Hebrew prophetic tradition.[117] As a faithful Jew, he saw himself as chosen by the God and having received a special mission. His attitude towards the Jewish tradition remained intact after receiving the call. In Gal. 1:1-11, Paul

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[113] Betz, *Galatians*, 71-72.
[114] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 36-37.
[115] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 7-8, 36-37.
[116] Cf. Acts 26:28.
[117] Bornkamm, *Paul*, 14-15.

describes his experience by following the traditional Hebrew prophetic language.[118] For instance, the description in vv. 16-17, "But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles," follows the prophetic formula in Isa. 49:1, saying: "…The LORD called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me." Paul's description also exhibits similarity with Jer. 1:4-5:

> "4 Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."[119]

The fact that Paul adopts the Jewish prophetic language in describing his experience shows that he understood his change and mission within the Jewish prophetic tradition.[120]

In his undisputed letters, we also find Paul's continued confidence on the Jewish tradition and his past as a zealous Pharisee.[121] For instance, in Gal. 1:13-14, Paul

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[118] Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 27; Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 7; Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 7.

[119] Betz, *Galatians*, 69-72. L. Michael White, *From Jesus to Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 156-57. Cf. Jud. 13:5 says, "For behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines." Similar motif is found in non-prophetic texts, such as Ps. 22:9-10, "9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother's breast. 10 On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God," and 71:6, "Upon you I have leant from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb."

[120] Also the term ἀποκαλύψαι ("to reveal") is used of God in the LXX, often as referring to God's self-revelation and commissioning. For example, in 1 Sam. 2:27, "A man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus the LORD has said, 'I revealed (᾽Αποκαλυφθεὶς ἀπεκαλύφθην) myself to the family of your ancestor in Egypt when they were slaves to the house of Pharaoh." Also in Amos 3:7, "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, without revealing (μὴ ἀποκαλύψῃ) his secret to his servants the prophets." Cf. 1 Sam. 3:7, 21; 2 Sam. 7:27; Amos 3:7; Dan. 2:19, 22, 28-30.

confidently recalls his former life as a zealous observer of the Torah in the force of Hellenism.[122] Here he admits that he persecuted the followers of Jesus, but explains it as resulting from his deep devotion to the Jewish religion.[123] Also in Phil. 3:3-6, we observe Paul's confidence about his past life and this confidence continues, even though his thought on the boundary of the Jewish law underwent change as to include the gentiles.[124]

In short, what has changed after Paul's initial encounter with the risen Christ and subsequent revelations is that he now realized that Jesus was indeed the messiah and the fulfillment of the Jewish scriptures. This new understanding of the identity of Jesus changed Paul from an opposer to a proclaimer of Jesus Christ, and caused him to reinterpret his former life and revelatory experiences including the initial encounter with

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[121] Here Paul's confidence is different from the later pseudonymous letters. See 1 Tim. 1:13: "…even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the foremost."

[122] Betz, *Galatians*, 67 n105, n121. Zeal for the Torah was a general ideal in the Judaism of that time. For instance, in Josephus, *Ant.* 12.271: "…anyone be zealous for the laws of his country, and for the worship of God, let him follow me." Philo, *Spec.* 1.30, 2.253; *Abr.* 60; *Virt.* 175; *1 Macc.* 2:26, 27, 50; *2 Macc.* 4:2; *4 Macc.* 18:12. See Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 1: 114, 287, 300, 305, 312, 314. Concern for the ancestral tradition was also a common ideal in Hellenistic world, see Isocrates, 1.11; Plato, *Prot.* 343A; Diogenes, *L.* 9.38; Philo, *Mos.* 2.161.

[123] While we need to keep in mind that Paul has an apologetic agenda in describing his past life and change, this does not invalidate his robust consciousness for his past life as a faithful Jew. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 9. For a critique on taking Paul's words on face value, see Craffert, "Paul's Damascus Experience," 37. While we should also evaluate Paul's own accounts on his change as Craffert notes, it still remains true that Paul understood it within the Jewish tradition. See Chapter 4 for more discussion on Paul's confidence in his past and repentance.

[124] Haenchen, *Acts*, 625; Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles,'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002), 198; Larry W. Hurtado, "Convert, Apostate or Apostle to the Nations: The "Conversion" of Paul in Recent Scholarship," *SR* 22 (1993): 274.

the risen Christ.[125] As Paul described his experience as a "call" in the Hebrew tradition, and also saying that his change and mission were planned by God from the beginning, Paul understands his change as following the divinely pre-destined path. Thus as Stendahl says, Paul was a Jew who was "called," but not "converted," at least according to his own understanding as expressed in his letters.[126] Divine calling resulted in his changed opinion and behaviors toward Jesus and his followers, but did not involve renouncing his previous attachments to the Jewish law and customs. As discussed in Section 1.2, while Segal persists in calling Paul a "convert" because of the radicality of his change, it should be noted that it is not Paul but Luke who dramatizes Paul's change as a radical turn that discards one's past as a whole. Based on Paul's letters which shows his self-understanding of the change clearly as a "call," calling Paul a "convert" is misleading and disguises the Lukan literary effort to recast Paul's experience not only as a "call" but also a "conversion."

2.3. Amplification of Paul's Experience in Acts

Luke describes Saul's encounter with the risen Christ in Acts 9:1-19a, 22:1-21, and 26:1-32. The fact that he repeats this episode three times in different places of Acts suggests that Luke considered Saul's change critical in describing the development of the early church.[127] There exist noticeable discrepancies between three accounts, for instance the narrator of the event, the role of Saul's companions, specific dialogue between Saul and the divine persona, Saul's blindness, presence of Ananias, and the exact point at which and through whom Paul's gentile mission is revealed, etc. In the early days of

[125] Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 49-50 n54; Craffert, "Paul's Damascus Experience," 41. Isenberg says that Paul did not reject his former lifestyle and thoughts but "the present values of those categories." S. R. Isenberg, "Some Uses of and Limitations of Social Scientific Methodology in the Study of Early Christianity," in *SBL 1980 Seminar Papers* (Chico: Scholars, 1980), 39..

[126] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 7.

[127] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 275.

scholarship, these discrepancies were often explained as resulting from Luke's use of different sources or lack of attentiveness in harmonizing the details.[128] Recently, however, more scholars begin to see the discrepancies as resulting from Luke's literary work and focus on the Lukan narratological and theological intentions in creating these discrepancies.[129] For instance, F. F. Bruce explains the discrepancies merely as Luke's stylistic variation, while E. Haenchen sees them as part of Luke's technique of repetition to impress his readers.[130] More specifically, in his recent study on Acts with narrative criticism, Daniel Marguerat analyzed the narratological functions of three accounts in the plot of Acts and explained some discrepancies as resulting from the Lukan literary purposes as the narrative unfolds. Understanding the narratological function of each chapter allows us to see the Lukan redactions more clearly and also to better understand the role of the discrepancies in these accounts. Since I will discuss specific discrepancies in detail when it is relevant to the discussion, here it will suffice to note the general focuses of three accounts in Acts.

Acts 9 is part of a sequence that begins in chapter 8 with the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the Jerusalem Church (8:1-4). There follows the initial

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[128] H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 72-3. For the source critical approach, see E. Hirsh, "Die drei Berichte der Apostelgeschichte über die Bekehrung des Paulus," *ZNW* 28 (1929): 305-12; B. Witherington, "Editing the Good News: Some Synoptic Lessons for the Study of Acts," in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996)*, 339. Cf. For the summary of previous scholarship, see G. Lohfink, *La conversion de saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 39-57; Hamm, "Paul's Blindness," 63; Jolivet, "The Lukan Account," 210; Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 180-81.

[129] M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: SCM, 1947), 2-3, 110-11, 158-59 n147, 182-3; Hamm, "Paul's Blindness," 63; D. M. Stanley, "Paul's Conversion: Why the Three Accounts?" *CBQ* 15 (1953), 315-38; Hedrick, "Paul's Conversion/Call," 415-32; Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 52-95.

[130] Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles*, 232; Hedrick, "Paul's Conversion/Call," 427-32; E. Haenchen, *Acts*, 357.

dispersion of the movement because of this persecution, which results in a series of conversions of Simon the magician (8:5-25), the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40), and Saul (9:1-19). Saul's story belongs to Luke's description of the rapid spread of the Jesus movement, which reaches its climax in chapter 10 in the encounter of Peter and Cornelius and the beginning of the mission for the gentiles.[131] The focus of this section of the narrative is to show the dramatic power of God in turning the people to the community of Jesus.[132] In Acts 9 we thus observe Luke's literary effort to stress the reversal of Saul's identity from a persecutor to a follower and the dramatic process of his turning[133], but relatively less focus on Paul's calling for the gentiles than we discover in Acts 22 and 26.

In this passage, Luke separates two events of Saul's conversion and calling, and remains curiously silent about the gentile mission. In Acts 9:15-16, Ananias learns about the divine plan upon Saul:

> 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; 16 I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

Here it is only Ananias who learns about this plan, and it remains unclear whether and when exactly Saul realized his gentile mission. Ananias heals Saul's blindness and guides him to join the movement, but does not explicitly inform Saul about his gentile mission.

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[131] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 113. In the stories of Acts 8-10, a believer is sent to an unexpected person through divine initiative and this journey ends up in a conversion. See Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "The Overthrown Enemy: Luke's Portrait of Paul," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1985 Seminar Papers* (ed., Kent Harold Richards; Atlanta: Scholars, 1985), 439-49.

[132] Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 189-90; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: The Crossroad, 1997), 95.

[133] Robert Allen Black, "Conversion Stories in Acts" (PhD diss., Emory University, 1985), 148.

Rather, Luke portrays the process of Saul's joining of the Jesus community and transformed status as a zealous proclaimer of Jesus:

> 17 So Ananias went and entered the house, and laid his hands on him and said, "Saul my brother, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes; he regained his sight and as getting up he was baptized, 19 and after taking some food he regained his strength. He was with the disciples in Damascus for several days, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues that he is the son of God.

In the following scene of Acts 9:21-31, Luke depicts Saul as proclaiming among the Jews but not specifically to the gentiles.

Whereas in Acts 9 Luke as an omnipotent narrator focused on describing Saul's dramatic change, in Acts 22 and 26 Luke has different stresses as having Paul narrate his own experience. Acts 22 is Paul's final speech to a Jewish audience, an apologia to defend himself from the charge of breaking with the Jewish tradition (21:28).[134] Here we observe Luke's deliberate emphasis on Paul's Jewishness and the continuity of his identity as a faithful Jew before and after his call. For instance, Paul speaks in Hebrew (21:40), near the Temple, addressing his "brothers and fathers" (22:1), and he comments his training in the school of Gamaliel (v.3) and his relationship with the "brothers" in Damascus (v.5). Ananias is now identified as "a devout man according to the Law, well spoken by all the Jews who lived there" (v.12). With these details, Luke makes Saul's radical turn as securely standing in line with the Jewish tradition.

As in Acts 9, here in Acts 22 Luke continues to distinguish between Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus and his call by narrating his commission separately. In Acts 22, however, Luke brings Saul's conversion and calling closer than Acts 9 as

[134] Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 197; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 276-78; G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984), 137. Cf. For the discussion on Acts 22 and 26 as a Lukan creation, see Dibelius, *Studies*, 180; Haenchen, *Acts*, 104, 327.

Ananias explicitly reveals Saul that he will become a witness of the messiah to "all the men (πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους)":

> 14 Then he said, "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; 15 for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, by calling on his name."

In the following passage (22:17-21), Luke depicts Paul's mission for the gentiles within the Jewish tradition, as Saul directly receives the calling for the gentiles after returning to Jerusalem while he is praying in the Temple (vv.17-21). Luke also incorporates the literary form of a traditional prophetic call narrative to Paul which was applied to Ananias in Acts 9: Paul receives a divine warning (v.18), objects to it (vv.20-21), but again receives divine assurance by being sent to the gentiles (v. 21).[135]

Acts 26 is Paul's another apologetic speech with its own purpose.[136] Whereas Acts 22 focused on presenting Paul's conversion and call as standing in continuity with the Jewish tradition, Acts 26 focuses on presenting the Jesus movement in the Graeco-Roman culture and identifying the import of Saul's change in relation to the gentile world.[137] Thus while Jesus addresses Saul in Hebrew language (v.14), Luke adds Hellenistic elements such as the proverb "it is hard for you to kick against the goad" (v.14),[138] depicts Paul as a virtuous man in the Greek philosophical ideal,[139] and uses

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[135] Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 197-99. Haenchen and Tannehill point out that the presence of Ananias and his doubt on the divine plan for Saul in fact highlights the radicality of Saul's change and the divine power. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 116; Haenchen, *Acts*, 324.

[136] G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984), 137.

[137] Cf. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 316.

[138] This is a long-known proverb in Hellenistic literature since Aeschylus (*Ag.* 1624). See Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 200-201; L. Schmid, "κέντρον," *TDNT* 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 663-68.

typical vocabularies of Hellenistic Judaism to describe Paul's mission in v. 18.[140] Luke also makes Jewish hostility to Paul as a matter of internal controversy (v.3), thus presenting Paul's mission not as a threat to the Roman world.[141] Most clearly in 26:17-18, with reference to Isa. 49:6, Luke describes Paul as receiving the call for the gentiles directly from the divine at the moment of his vision and conversion, that he should open the eyes of the gentiles in order to convert them "from darkness to light."

In Acts 26, we see Luke's focus on Paul's special call for the gentile mission, especially in his description that Paul himself is directly commissioned by the God to the gentiles. Now Ananias, who in the previous chapters helped Saul to understand his experience and shift into the Jesus movement (Acts 9), and informed him about the special divine plan (Acts 22), completely disappears from the scene. Luke brings Saul's conversion and calling completely together as one event.

Being mindful of these differing narratological functions of Acts 9, 22, and 26 in Acts, from all three accounts we observe clear Lukan literary tendency to make Paul's change a immediate one-time event. As we have noted above, Paul's letters suggest that there was an interim period of up to three years between his epiphanic event with the risen Christ and his first visit to Jerusalem.[142] It seems that during this period Paul accepted Jesus as the messiah prophesied in the Jewish tradition and gained a fuller understanding of the meaning of his encounter. Yet there is no reference to his actual working among gentiles until he moves to "the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:20-2:2)." There might have been several revelations that are not described explicitly in

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[139] John Clayton Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), 83-91; Pervo, *Acts,* 636; Abraham J. Malherbe, ""Not in a Corner": Early Christian Apologetic in Acts 26:26," in *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 160.

[140] Cf. Col. 1:12-14; 1 Thess. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:10.

[141] Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 190; Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 78-79.

[142] Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 8.

Paul's letters but contributed to his understanding of the encounter and mission, as ones in 2 Cor. 12:1-9 and Gal. 2:1-2.

Quite differently, Luke describes Saul as having a radical and quick transformation because of the encounter with the risen Christ. In Acts 9:17, Ananias visits Saul and informs him about the meaning of Saul's experience, by saying: "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Here Luke stresses the immediacy with which Saul regained his sight, by saying:

> 18 Immediately (εὐθέως) something like scales fell from his eyes; he regained his sight and as getting up he was baptized, 19 and after taking some food he regained his strength.

Similarly in Acts 22, Paul's conversion is quite immediate. As Ananias heals Saul, he urges for quick response from Paul:

> 14 Then he said, "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; 15 for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, by calling on his name."

In Acts 26, while we do not have as much details as in the previous accounts, Paul speaks about his apt response to the heavenly vision:

> "19 After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, and in Jerusalem and throughout the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds worthy of repentance."

Luke's emphasis on the immediacy of Paul's change is in line with the descriptions in Acts on other people who newly join the church. In many cases, as the apostles reveal the truth about the identity of Jesus and the presence of the monotheistic God through their

speeches and miracles, those who heard and saw quickly change their minds and join the Jesus movement.[143] For instance in Acts 2:41, as the Jews listen to Peter's speech about the messiah, they accept the message and join the community on that same day: "So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added." Another example is Ethiopian eunuch, who as soon as learning the good news about Jesus, hastens to be baptized. He says to Philip, "Look! here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:37)

One of the most explicit examples of Luke depicting Christian conversion as a quick process is the conversation between Paul and the King Agrippa II in Acts 26:14-29. Here, to Paul who elaborated the gospel message and his conversion, Agrippa retorts, "So quickly, then, would you persuade me to become a Christian (Ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι; v.28)?"[144] Paul replies, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am – except for these chains (v.29)."[145]

As Abraham J. Malherbe points out, the idea of sudden change is conveyed in the many accounts of conversion to philosophy.[146] While the earlier form of Stoic philosophy and some contemporary polemical parties derided such an idea, contemporary

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[143] Acts 9:1-22; 13:42-43, 48; 16:14-15, 29-33; 17:2-4, 10-11; 22:6-16. Cf. Acts 18:24-26; Lk. 15:17; 19:1-8. For other examples, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.37.3; Malherbe, ""Not in a Corner,"" 162 n87.

[144] For discussion on this statement, see K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity* (5 vols.; ed. F. J. Jackson and K. Lake; London: Macmillan, 1933), 5:322-24; Haenchen, *Acts*, 689; R. F. O' Toole, *The Christological Climax of Paul's Defense* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 141-45.

[145] Here we see that Luke patterned this scene into a conventional confrontation between the wise man and ruler. Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 17.

[146] Malherbe, ""Not in a Corner,"" 161, esp. n79. Cf. Lucian, *The Double Indictment* 17; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 4.16; Cf. Augustine, *Contra Julianum, haeresis Pelagiana defensorum* 1.4.12; *Confessions* 6.7.11-12.

Stoics thought that if a person makes consistent moral progress, he suddenly transforms into a wise man and might be even unaware of the change.[147]

This kind of sudden change, however, often met with sarcastic responses in the texts, as we observe in Paul's case. For instance, in the second century philosophical text *Letter to Nigrinus* by Lucian, sudden change of Lucian upon the revelation of philosophical truth receives his friend's derogatory exclamation: "… you have changed all of a sudden, and, in short, have a supercilious air. I should be glad to find out from you how it comes that you are so peculiar, and what is the cause of all this?"[148]

According to Malherbe, this type of derision on a sudden change can be understood in relation to the protreptic purpose of conversion accounts, since it draws attention to the speaker or former convert as an example for the readers/listeners to follow.[149] Similarly Luke, with Paul's mention of his sudden change and Agrippa's blunt response, presents Paul as a model to follow and Christian conversion as an immediate response to the revelation of the gospel.[150] For Luke, the gospel possessed the "inherent persuasiveness" that can results in a sudden conversion of the audience.[151]

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[147] J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969), 90-91; Malherbe, ""Not in a Corner,"" 161.

[148] Lucian, *Letter to Nigrinus*, 1. See also the similarity with Seneca, *Ep.* 6.1: "I feel my dear Lucilius, that I am being not only reformed, but transformed… And indeed this very fact is proof that my spirit is altered into something better, - that it can see its own faults, of which it was previously ignorant. In certain cases sick men are congratulated because they themselves have perceived that they are sick." Seneca notes his sudden change which made him to see his previous errors.

[149] Malherbe, ""Not in a Corner,"" 161-62. For another instance, see Lucian, *Letter to Nigrinus*, 38; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8.2. Cf. On the protreptic purpose of conversion accounts, see O. Gigon, "Antike Erzählungen über die Berufung zur Philosophie," *MusHelv* 3 (1946): 10-11; Jean Daniélou, *Message Évangélique et culture hellénistique aux IIe et IIIe siècles* (Tournai: Desclée, 1961), 86-91.

[150] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 16-17.

[151] Malherbe shows this point by comparing Acts and Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.3-6. See Malherbe, ""Not in a Corner,"" 162-63.

In addition to making Paul's experience a quick transformation, Luke also stresses the radical rupture between Paul's past and present by emphasizing his former persecution upon the followers of Jesus. From Paul's letters, we learn that Paul was involved in some sort of persecution upon the church. In Gal. 1:13 Paul recalls his audience what they have already heard of, i.e., his former life as a persecutor of the church: "You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the Church of God and was ravaging it (ὅτι καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν)."[152] In 1 Cor. 15:9 he also says: "For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God (διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ)."[153] As Arland J. Hultegren points out, however, from Paul's letters we do not gain any hint about why he persecuted the church and to what extent.[154]

In Acts, based on Paul's self-descriptions, Luke also identifies Paul's former life as the persecutor of the church, but with more details and intensity. The Lukan elaboration is most discernable in Acts 9 where he provides vivid images of Saul's persecutions and magnifies the viciousness of his actions.[155] In the preceding section of Acts 7:53-8:3, Luke for the first time introduces Paul at the scene of the first persecution

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[152] In Gal. 1:23 Paul again affirms his former life: "they only heard it said, "The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy.""

[153] See also Phil. 3:6: "… as to zeal, a persecutor of the Church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless." Concerning the debates on the reason of persecution, see Arland J. Hultgren, "Paul's Pre-Christian Persecutions of the Church: Their Purpose, Locale, and Nature," *JBL* 95 (1976): 97-99.

[154] Hultgren, "Paul's Pre-Christian," 105. For Paul's use of the term "persecution" in his letters, see Rom 8:35; 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12; 15:9; 2 Cor. 4:9; 12:10; Gal. 1:13, 23; 4:29; 5:11; 6:12; Phil. 3:6; 1 Thess. 2:15. Based on his analysis, Hultgren conjectures the actual degree of Paul's persecution was far less than what is depicted in Acts.

[155] Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian,* 191; Concerning the Lukan literary redaction throughout Acts 9, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 114-27.

against the church. Saul is involved in the death of Stephen and the following so-called "great persecution (διωγμὸς μέγας; 8:1)."[156] Then in Acts 9:1-2, Luke again describes Saul as being on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus to arrest Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem:

> 1 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord (Ὁ δὲ Σαῦλος, ἔτι ἐνπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου,), went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.[157]

Here we see the Lukan redactional elements as he uses similar terminologies in Acts 7:51-52:

> 51 You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your fathers used to do. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute (ἐδίωξαν)? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers (φονεῖς)."[158]

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[156] Hultgren, "Paul's Pre-Christian Persecutions," 100; Haenchen, *Acts,* 82-83; 296-98.

[157] Acts 9 emphasizes Saul's pre-conversion status as the persecutor of the Church by making Ananias repeat Saul's identity as a persecutor. See 9:13-14: "13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name."

[158] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 114. Lüdemman also analyzed the Lukan redactional features in Acts 9:1-2, that ἔτι, μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου in v.1 and ὅπως ἐάν, ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας in v.2 are Luke connecting the redactional episodes of Saul's involvement in Stephen's death (Acts 7:58) and his subsequent activity as a successful persecutor (Acts 8:3). Lüdemman, *Early Christianity*, 106. I do not agree with Lüdemman in that only these terms can be attributed to Luke. Acts 9:1-2 as a whole is a Lukan creation to depict Saul as a successful and zealous persecutor to dramatize the contrast between his before and after the encounter with the risen Christ.

In Paul's letters, however, we do not learn that Paul ever went from Jerusalem to Damascus for persecution, nor can this type of journey be historical since the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin did not extend outside Judaea.[159] By placing Saul on the liminal space of the road to Damascus and the unexpected quick change he had gone through, Luke dramatizes Saul's radical contrast between a zealous persecutor and an apostle. With these illustrations, Luke thoroughly depicts Saul as a violent persecutor against the Jesus movement. As in Paul's letters, Luke provides no specific reasons lying behind Saul's persecution, so the readers remain unclear what caused Paul to persecute the church. Without any background rationale of the persecution, Saul is a straightforward anti-church, who without specified reason persecuted those who belonged to "the Way" (9:2; 22:4) and opposed the name of Jesus of Nazareth (9:4; 22:7; 26:9, 14).[160]

Saul the zealous persecutor, however, as soon as he encounters the risen Christ and realizes his true identity as the messiah, suddenly changes to a zealous apostle. In Acts 9:23-29, now Saul is a zealous proclaimer of the messiah, who is persecuted by the Jews and threatened with death. Whereas previously he was taught and guided by Ananias, now in Acts 9:25 Paul is the master of the disciples.[161] Similarly in Acts 22:22-

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[159] For further discussion on the historicity of this trope, see Lüdemman, *Early Christianity*, 106-7; Bornkamm, *Paul,* 15-16; Hultgren, "Paul's Pre-Christian Persecutions," 110. Hultgren says: "Even if the Sanhedrin could pass capital sentences, it is not likely that it or any other Jewish body had authority to put offenders to death for any cause during Paul's lifetime." Cf. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 1-47; E. Lohse, *History of the Suffering and Death of Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 76-79; D. R. Catchpole, "The Problem of the Historicity of the Sanhedrin Trial," in *The Trial of Jesus* (Naperville: Allenson, 1970), 59.

[160] Hultgren, "Paul's Pre-Christian," 100; Marguerat, *The First Christians,* 185. In Paul's apologies of Acts 22:4 and 26:9-11, Luke again depicts Saul's zeal as a violent persecutor. In Acts 26:10-11, Saul is even involved in death sentences and extended his persecution in the foreign cities.

[161] Marguerat, *The First Christians,* 191.

29, Paul the preacher of the gospel is now flogged, tied up with thongs, and accused by the Jews.

Another Lukan literary creation to amplify the transformation of Saul is to change his name from Saul to Paul. Paul's supposed Hebrew name Saul (Hebrew: שָׁאוּל; Greek: Σαῦλος) is only known from Acts, especially where Luke depicts Paul's pre-conversion state. In Acts 13:9 Luke for the first time introduces Saul's Greek name Paul (Παῦλος) by saying: "But Saul, also known as Paul (Σαῦλος δέ, ὁ καὶ Παῦλος), filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him," and invariably uses Paul in the following narratives. Luke then comes back to the name Saul in Acts 22 and 26. Luke's use of two names for the apostle is intriguing especially when we consider his special attention to names in Acts, and this forces us to ask the purpose and narratological function of this literary effort.[162]

Concerning this change, some have taken a historical approach and conjectured reasons why Paul would have two names in the ancient Mediterranean context. The explanations include: the apostle had the name Paul from his birth and added the *signum* Saul in accordance with the custom in the Greek East; he took the name Paul in honor of the proconsul Sergius Paulus who just converted in Acts 13:6-12; he took this Greek name for the convenience of his gentile mission, etc.[163]

Recently, however, scholars approached this issue with a narratological perspective by asking why the author noted Saul's name change in that particular section of Acts.[164] Marguerat, for instance, suggests that the introduction of Paul's Greek name corresponds to the orientation of the Pauline mission as unfolds in the following chapters

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[162] Concerning Luke's careful attention to names in Acts, see Liew, "Naming Acts," 136-37.

[163] G. A. Harrer, "Saul Who Also is Called Paul," *HTR* 33 (1940): 19-34, esp. 23 n15 for even earlier scholarly arguments; Philip Schaff, "Biblical Monographs: Saul and Paul," *Methodist Quarterly Review* 51 (1869): 422-24.

[164] Cf. John Clayton Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), 23-61.

of Acts, which includes the non-Jews.[165] At the same time, by having the Greek name Paul and the Roman citizenship, but also being a Hebrew with the name Saul, the apostle belongs to the crossroads of Jewish and gentile world, to both Jerusalem and Rome. Marguerat says: "This double origin constructs Paul in accordance with the Christianity whose identity Luke establishes. It is a religion that claims its Jewish origin and seeks its place in Roman society."[166] While I think this is one narratological function of the name change, it still remains problematic why Luke does not change the apostle's name soon after his conversion but only later in Acts 13:9.[167]

As Sean M. McDonough points out, I think to answer the presented question we should take into account the immediate narratological context of Paul's name change in Acts.[168] The introduction of the name Paul in Acts 13:9 is followed by Saul's lengthy speech to the synagogue leaders in Antioch. This speech resembles one made by Peter in Acts 2 and especially Stephen in Acts 7, where Luke introduced Saul as a violent persecutor of the church. In Acts 13, Paul, now being in the stance of Stephen, narrates Israel's history leading up to the coming of the messiah. Interestingly, here Luke includes Saul son of Kish in the sacred history (v.21), which is a unique case in the New Testament.

Based on these observations, McDonough points out two implications of the name Saul has in this narrative.[169] One is that Saul son of Kish was the chief persecutor of the messiah's forebear David as in 1 Sam. 18-31. In Acts 13:22, Luke also presents Saul son

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[165] Marguerat, *The First Christians*, 179 n2.

[166] Marguerat, *The First Christians*, 67. Stendahl argues that the name change symbolizes the change of focus in the missionary activity, but not Saul's "conversion." Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 11. I disagree with him in that I think that Saul's name change is also a literary device to stress Saul's radical change.

[167] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 11.

[168] Sean M. McDonough, "Small Change: Saul to Paul, Again," *JBL* 125 (2006): 390-91.

[169] McDonough, "Small Change," 390.

of Kish with negative image by saying that God removed him from the sacred genealogy. At the same time, the name Paul, Roman *Paulus,* denotes "small" in Latin, which is in contrast to Saul son of Kish who was famous for his physical stature. Saul is described in the LXX as: "a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people." (1 Sam. 9:2; cf. 10:23) David on the other hand, is typically depicted as "the little one" (1 Sam. 16:11; Cf. 17:33, 42) in contrast to Saul.

Considering these implications, McDonough concludes that the name change in Acts 13 is a vivid illustration of Paul's transformation from a rigorous persecutor to the humble servant of the messiah.[170] I agree with McDonough that this is the primary purpose of Luke mentioning Saul's name change in Acts 13, where Paul for the first time takes up the position as the apostle who is persecuted but boldly presents the truth about the messiah. In fact, in his analysis of the papyrological and epigraphical evidences from the third century CE in the Mediterranean region, G. H. R. Horsley observed that name change was sometimes used to indicate one's religious conversion. For instance, in the third century sarcophagus from Ravenna, a woman's two names are inscribed, her original name Tetratia Isias and her new name Memphius, above the scene illustrating her initiation into the cults of Isis and Sarapis.[171] She did not discard her previous name Isias which also reflects her devotion to the goddess Isis, but here we see that a religious devotion resulted in taking another name. While most of Horsley's evidences are from the later date than Acts, with some older examples from Egypt and the LXX, Horsley shows that the tradition of changing one's name upon his/her religious conversion was a widely

[170] One might conjecture that Luke is utilizing the motif in 1 Cor. 15:9, "the least of the apostle" in this passage.

[171] G. H. R. Horsley, "Name Change as an Indication of Religious Conversion in Antiquity," *Numen* 34 (1987), 4. For the inscription, see L. Vidman, Sylloge *Inscriptionum Religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae* (Berolini: W. de Gruyter, 1969), no. 568, 266-68. For other evidences, see Horsley, "Name Change," 1-17.

attested tradition in antiquity.[172] In fact, we cannot be sure whether the name change was just a literary convention that does not necessarily reflect the practices in the society. Horsley's analysis, however, increases the possibility that Luke is using this long-attested literary/epistolary convention to stress the radicality of Paul's change in Acts.

Finally, Luke identifies Saul's experience not just as a calling but a conversion by utilizing other literary motifs that are not found in the Hebrew prophetic tradition. In Paul's letters, the visionary or auditory elements involved in his encounter with the risen Christ were not specific in detail. In Acts on the other hand, Luke adds details such as a sudden encounter with the magnificent light, Saul's prostration, heavenly voice revealing the purpose of the vision, which are often found in the Hebrew prophetic literature. It seems that Luke, while following Paul, also expands Paul's own comments on his experience by incorporating other literary motifs found in the Hebrew prophetic tradition. For instance, Segal argues that Luke is deliberately patterning the story after the Jewish prophetic tradition as in the LXX Jer. 1:5-11, Isa. 6:1-9, and Ezek. 1:27-28.[173]

While we see in Acts some motifs common in the prophetic tradition, however, the problem is that we do not always find the typical elements and pattern of the prophetic narratives. First of all, in all the three accounts on Saul's "conversion" in Acts, Luke does not use the typical motif of the Hebrew prophetic calling narratives that the God has chosen the prophet even before he was born, as depicted in Isa. 49:1-6 and Jer.

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[172] Horsley, "Name Change," 5-7. Cf. Gen. 17:1-5, 15-16; 32:24-30. For the case in the New Testament, see Mt. 16:13-19.

[173] Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 7; Pervo, *Acts,* 12; William Kemp L. Clark, "The Use of the LXX in Acts," in Frederick J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity,* Vol. 2. *Prolegomena II* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 66-105; J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (trans., F. Clarke; Richmond: John Knox, 1959), 24-35. Munck says that Luke formed the narrative in Acts are modeled on the order of OT prophetic call/commissioning narratives and also to Paul's Gal. 1:15; *The Acts of the Apostles* (Galen City: Doubleday, 1967), 82; Dibelius, *Studies,* 158 n47; Haenchen, *Acts,* 107-10; H. J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: SPCK, 1968), 213-38.

1:4-5. This element of closeness is also found in Paul's recount of his experience in Gal. 1:15 ("set me apart before I was born"), but not in Acts.[174]

At the same time, Luke's descriptions of Saul's experience do not follow the typical prophetic pattern. According to Segal, prophetic writings commonly include an encounter with God, a divine commissioning, resistance by the prophet, divine assurance, and preparation for the task by signs.[175] As Marguerat and Steck have rightly noted, however, Acts 9.3-9 lacks the constituent of initial calling that characterizes typical prophetic call in the Old Testament.[176] In this passage, Saul is only informed about his next step, i.e., to search for Ananias, and it is in fact Ananias who knows the divine commission given to Paul. As noted above, Luke does not describe Ananias as informing Saul about the specific content of his divine mission (9:17). It is only the readers who know that Saul is now chosen for the divine mission, but not Saul, differently from the OT narratives of prophetic calling. We also do not observe the elements of divine commissioning, resistance, or divine assurance.

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[174] Charles W. Hedrick, "Paul's Conversion/Call: A Comparative Analysis of the Three Reports in Acts," *JBL* 100 (1981): 415-432, esp. 415.

[175] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 9. Similarly to Segal, W. Zimmerli showed literary connection between Acts 9.3-9 and prophetic call narrative in Ezek. 1-24. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 1: 16-21. He categorized prophetic calling narratives in the Old Testament into two, one which has the scheme of divine calling – mandate – objection – overruling of the objection and sending out, and the other accompanying a theophanic vision. According to Zimmerli, the first type includes Jer. 1.4-10, Exod. 3, Judg. 6, 1 Sam. 9-10, and Ezek. 1-2, whereas the second is observed in Isa. 6; 1 Kgs. 22.19-22. Zimmerli includes Acts 9.3-9 to this second type of prophetic calling. However, as Steck has rightly pointed out, the constitutive elements that Zimmerli uses to categorize theophanic visionary type of prophecy is lacking in Acts 9.3-9; Odil Hannes Steck, "Formgeschichtliche Bemerkungen zur Darstellung des Damaskusgeschehens in der Apostelgeschichte," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 67 (1976): 20-28; Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 192-93.

[176] Marguerat, *The First*, 192-3; Steck, "Formgeschichtliche Bemerkungen," 20-28.

It is Lukan description of the vision of Ananias in Acts 9 in fact, rather than Saul's, that more closely follows the traditional prophetic tradition as proposed by Segal and Zimmerli. For instance, Ananias answers the divine voice by saying with the typical human answer to the epiphany, "Here I am, Lord (v.10; divine calling)."[177] Then the God commands him to meet Saul (vv.11-12; mandate), and then Ananias' objection follows (vv.13-14; objection). The God reassures Ananias about the divine plan upon Saul (vv.15-16; overruling of the objection), and finally Ananias follows the divine order and the sign is given both to Ananias and Saul as Saul recovers his sight (vv.17-18; sign). Comparison between Saul's christophany and Ananias' vision in Acts 9 again shows that Luke describes Saul's experience somewhat differently from typical prophetic calling narratives.[178]

In Acts 22 as well, Saul's encounter itself does not follow the typical prophetic pattern, while we find this pattern in the following description of Saul's commission in the Temple. Acts 26 most securely follows the prophetic pattern, which can be explained by Luke's focus on Paul's calling in this chapter. The fact that Luke's descriptions of Saul's initial encounter with the risen Christ in three accounts of Acts do not always follow prophetic tradition forces us to conjecture that Luke is identifying Paul's experience more than just a calling.

Most importantly, we also observe in the Lukan descriptions the motifs that we do not see in the Jewish prophetic tradition or Paul's own descriptions of his experience, such as Saul becoming blind as a result of seeing the light, transition from blindness to sight, presence of Ananias who helps Saul to understand his experience and turn to God,

[177] Cf. Gen. 22.1-2, 11-12; 1 Sam. 3.4-14; Jub. 44.5; Ezra 12.2-13.

[178] Luke describes the experience of Ananias as a "vision (ὅραμα)" in Acts 9:10, which is a term only occurring in Acts among the New Testament texts except in Mt. 17:9 in describing the Transfiguration of Jesus. In Acts, this term denotes a vision either awake or sleep, as used in describing the visions of Cornelius (10:3), Moses (7:31), Peter (10:17, 19), and Ananias (9:10). Luke does not describe Saul's encounter of the risen Christ with this concept. See Acts 7:31; 10:3, 17, 19; 18:9. Pervo, *Acts*, 243 n81.

Saul's repentance, and stark contrast between Saul's pre- and post-encounter as discussed above. In fact, some of these details, such as the blindness, darkness, and repentance, are what Isaiah passages and Paul used in relation to the gentiles. While I will discuss some of these elements in detail in the following chapters, the presence of these additional literary elements makes it difficult to conclude that Luke elaborated Paul's experience solely on the basis of Hebrew prophetic narratives.[179]

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed that Luke consciously used some of Paul's letters in describing Paul's experience of the risen Christ in Acts. While there were common literary elements of the Hebrew prophetic tradition both in Paul's letters and Acts, Luke twisted and added details that characterizes Paul's change not just as a "calling" but a "conversion," such as dramatization of the contrast between his before and after the experience, name change, stress on the immediacy of Saul's response to the vision, etc. Moreover, Luke incorporated the contrasting metaphors of darkness/blindness to light/sight and repentance to depict Saul's change, which are not found in Paul's letters and Hebrew prophetic calling narratives. In the following chapters, I will show that these two main elements, together with amplification of Paul's change discussed in this chapter, characterize Paul's "conversion" as a radical philosophical turn.

[179] See Chapter 3 and 4.

Chapter 3. "From Darkness to Light": Saul's Blindness

Despite the discrepancies among the Lukan descriptions of Paul's "conversion" in Acts 9, 22, and 26, the motif of transition from darkness to light persists in all three accounts. In Acts 9 and 22, Paul becomes blind after encountering the divine light on his journey to Damascus (9:8; 22:11). He then recovers his sight as Ananias informs him the true identity of Jesus and/or divine mission for him (9:17-18; 22:12-16). In Acts 26, Paul does not state that he became blind after the revelatory experience, even when he learned about the divine mission directly in his revelation (26:14-18). At that moment, however, Luke succinctly identifies Paul's mission by using the motif of receiving sight, and transition from darkness to light, but now specifically for the gentiles:

> 17 "I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles-- to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."[180]

This transition from darkness to light is exactly what Paul himself went through in Acts 9 and 22, i.e., turning from blindness to the recovery of sight. As we will see shortly, Paul uses these metaphors of blindness, darkness, and recovery of sight for the conversion of the gentiles, but not for himself. Why then does Luke describe Paul's experience as a radical transition from darkness to light with his blindness in Acts 9 and 22, and how

[180] 17 ἐξαιρούμενός σε" ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ "ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν, εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς" αὐτῶν, 18 τοῦ "ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς" καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κλῆρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

should we understand the discrepancies between these accounts and Acts 26? How do the contrasting metaphors of blindness-sight and darkness-light in Paul's "conversion" contribute to the Lukan construction of "Christian conversion" in Acts?

In this chapter, by analyzing the motif of blindness/darkness in the three accounts of Acts, I first show that Saul's blindness in his encounter with the risen Christ is the Lukan literary effort to identify his experience as a definite "conversion," that other Jews and gentiles all share in joining the Jesus movement. At the same time, by comparing the Lukan descriptions of Paul's blindness and regaining of sight with Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish texts deploying this motif, I will show that Luke reinterprets Paul's experience as a radical cognitive shift, a turn from ignorance to the correct knowledge of the Jesus Christ.

3.1. Saul's Blindness in Acts 9, 22, and 26

Acts 9 is the most detailed version in describing Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus[181]:

> 3 Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him (ἐξαίφνης τε αὐτὸν περιήστραψεν φῶς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ). 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5 He asked, "who are you, Lord (Τίς εἶ, κύριε)?" The voice said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you have to do." 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, because they heard the voice but saw no one (ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς μηδένα δὲ θεωροῦντες). 8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open he could see nothing (ἀνεῳγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἔβλεπεν)[182]; so they led him by the hand and brought him

[181] Concerning the differing focuses of Acts 9, 22, and 26 in Lukan descriptions of Saul's "conversion," refer to Section 2.3.

[182] Later manuscripts such as A^2 C E^{gr} H L P 614 and others show textual variant of "no one (οὐδένα)" instead of "nothing (οὐδὲν; v.8)," perhaps in agreement with μηδένα in v.7. Acts 22:9 states that Saul's companions saw the light, and the later change into οὐδένα might be an effort to smooth out the discrepancy between Acts 9 and 22, by

> to Damascus (χειραγωγοῦντες δὲ αὐτὸν εἰσήγαγον εἰς Δαμασκόν). 9 He could not see for three days (καὶ ἦν ἡμέρας τρεῖς μὴ βλέπων), and neither ate nor drank.

In this passage, Luke describes Saul's sudden experience of seeing the light from heaven on the road to Damascus (v.3). In the subsequent oral exchange, Saul addresses the voice as "lord/sir (κύριε)," which is a typical term to address a stranger, especially a divine being (v.5).[183] In this conversation, Saul is informed about the identity of the voice as Jesus (v.5) but not the fact that he is the messiah. The voice also reveals Saul about the next steps that he should take, i.e., to "get up and enter the city" and that there is something planned for him, but nothing more than that (v.6). Without fully understanding the import of the revelatory event he has just had, now Saul is blind because of the encounter with the divine light (v.8).

Meanwhile, a disciple in Damascus, named Ananias, is informed in his own vision about the divine plan concerning Saul and is commissioned by the Lord to restore Saul's sight (9:10-16). As Ananias lays his hands upon Saul and reveals to him the identity of the revelatory figure as the Lord Jesus, Saul finally regains his sight and get baptized (v.18):

> 17 So Ananias went and entered the house, and laid his hands on him and said, "Saul my brother, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me (ὁ κύριος ἀπέσταλκέν με, Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ᾗ ἤρχου) so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately

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presenting the possibility that Saul's companions also saw the light but only did not see the human-like figure. See Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 318. Considering both the external (P74 א A* B i^{te} vg $syr^{p, h}$ $cop^{sa, G67}$) and internal evidence that Saul could not see in v.9, it seems safe to read it as "nothing."

[183] Hamm, "Paul's Blindness," 64. For another instance, in Acts 10:4, Cornelius addresses an angel as κύριε and 10:14 he also uses this term to address Peter. Here Saul may know that he is having a divine epiphany, but not about the identity of the divinity he is encountering. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), 163.

> something like scales fell from his eyes; he regained his sight and as getting up he was baptized (καὶ εὐθέως ἀπέπεσαν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ὡς λεπίδες, ἀνέβλεψέν τε, καὶ ἀναστὰς ἐβαπτίσθη), 19 and after taking some food he regained his strength. He was with the disciples in Damascus for several days, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues that he is the son of God.

Through Ananias' explanation Luke clarifies Saul's experience as belonging to the resurrection appearance of Jesus that other disciples also had. Luke uses the Greek term ὀφθείς (v.17) to mean "to appear," which was also used by Paul in his letters to describe his encounter with the risen Christ (1 Cor. 15:5-8). In Lk. 24:34 as well this term denotes Peter's experience of the risen Jesus.[184]

In Acts 9, we see Luke's stress on the optical aspect of Saul's experience by adding colorful literary details. For instance, in vv. 8-9 Luke gives the explanatory detail that even though Saul's eyes were open (v.8) he could not see and stayed blind for three days (v.9).[185] In v.8, Luke depicts Paul as being "led by hand (χειραγωγοῦντες)" by others, and here the Greek χειραγωγέω is rather a rare term used only few times in the Hellenistic Jewish literature in relation to one's blindness. For instance, in the LXX Jud. 16:26 (Codex Alexandrianus), the blind Samson is "led by hands (χειραγωγοῦντα)" of his attendants.[186] In Tob. 11:16, Tobit who now recovered his eyesight from his blindness is depicted as "being led by no one (ὑπὸ μηδενὸς χειραγωγούμενον)."[187] In the NT, this

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[184] Pervo, *Acts*, 244 n94.

[185] Pervo notes that the Lukan elaboration of "three days" designates a prebaptismal period of fasting, as in *Did.* 7:4; Justin, 1 *Apol*. 61.1. While this is one of the implications of Lukan elaboration, "three days" also gives the image of Saul staying in the darkness without sight for a certain period of time. See the following discussion in this Section 3.2. Pervo, *Acts*, 242 n78. Cf. *Jos. Asen.* 10:17; Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.23.1; 28; 30.1.

[186] Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 5.315.

[187] In *Letter of Aristeas* (2nd BCE) 239, to the king's philosophic question that how may one might become a ready listener, one of the Jewish translators answers as: "By understanding that knowledge is all profitable, so that whatever befall you may

term only occurs three times, all in Acts, twice to depict the blindness of Saul (Acts 9:8; 22:11) and once to depict that of the magician Elymas (13:11).

Luke also dramatizes the healing of Saul's eyesight by providing a vivid picture of the scene, that "something like scales fell from his eyes." (9:18) The literary metaphor of a scaly substance falling from Saul's eyes is found in other Greek and diaspora Jewish texts in describing recovery from blindness or eye illness so that the person can perceive the divine light (v.18). For instance, in Tob. 3:17, the angels heal Tobit's blinded eyes so that he can see the divine light: "So Raphael was sent to heal both of them: Tobit, by removing the white films from his eyes, so that he might see God's light with his eyes."[188] In particular, it is interesting to note that in both cases of Tobit and Saul their blindness represents the state without spiritual insight. Tobit, as a righteous man living in accordance with the Law, becomes blind by an unfortunate accident. His blindness not only causes him to lose his physical eyes but spiritual eyes as well. The subsequent narrative depicts Tobit as being incapable of supporting his family (Tob. 2:11), misjudging his wife as stealing a goat (2:13), loosing charitable acts that once characterized him (2:14), and erroneously concluding that God is punishing him for the

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choose something you have heard and apply it to the crisis, with God's guiding hand (σὺν χειραγωγία θεοῦ); for it remains that the consummations of all deeds are His." Here the term χειραγωγία gives the implication that the previous state of a person who is led by the Jewish God to the true knowledge is like blind. For the authorship and date, see Moses Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), 5-9.

[188] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 279. cf. Tob. 11:13. Hippocrates, Galen, and Dioscorides used the similar phrase to describe skin diseases, but not eye disease. W. K. Hobart, *The Medical Language of St. Luke* (Dublin, 1882), 39; Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 29.8.21. Here mercenary physicians are criticized for their direction not to pull off a film on the eyes. While Hobart argues that Luke particularly skilled in medical language, the appearance of this term in *Tobit* shows that Luke is deploying the widespread literary motif in describing Saul's recovery of his eyes and not that he was a physician or had specialty in medicine. Cf. A. Harnack, *Luke der Arzt* (1906).

sins of himself and his ancestors (3:3-4).[189] Tobit says, "What joy is left for me anymore, I am a man without eyesight; I cannot see the light of heaven, but I lie in darkness like the dead who no longer see the light." (5:10) Only after the angel Raphael restores his eyesight, Tobit can sing again the hymn of praise to God (11:14-15). While there exists difference in the larger contexts and the purposes of these two texts, Luke seems to be incorporating the popular motif of blindness as a way of representing Saul's true spiritual status.

In Acts 22:6-11, similarly to the description in Acts 9, Saul sees a sudden light and as a result, he is not able see:

> 6 "While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me (περὶ μεσημβρίαν ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ περιαστράψαι φῶς ἱκανὸν περὶ ἐμέ). 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' 8 I answered, 'Who are you, Lord (Τίς εἶ, κύριε)?' Then he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 I asked, 'What shall I do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.' 11 Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light (ὡς δὲ οὐκ ἐνέβλεπον ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τοῦ φωτὸς ἐκείνου), those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.

While numerous discrepancies from Acts 9 are observable, one important variant in relation to the motif of darkness-light is that in Acts 22 Saul's companions also saw the light but did not hear the voice of the Lord. Acts 22:9 narrates, "Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me." In Acts 9, it is uncertain whether the term "no one (μηδένα)" in v.7 implies that Saul's companions also saw the light and heard the voice, but did not see the human-like figure with whom Saul conversed (9:7).

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[189] For analysis on Tobit's blindness, see Chad Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 113-17.

Concerning this discrepancy between Acts 9 and 22, some scholars suggest that it results from the shifting agent from the omnipotent narrator in Acts 9 to Saul in Acts 22. For example, William S. Kurz says that while both Acts 9 and 22 emanate from the same author, Luke sets up the second narrator in Acts 22, Paul, to enunciate his own version of the story. As an apologetic speech for himself to the people of Jerusalem, this version thus emphasizes the fact that Saul was the only one who was handpicked by the God and privately received the divine commission.[190] In Acts 22:9 Luke now comments Saul's companions in a parenthesis within the larger dialogue between Saul and the Jewish audience, therefore heightening attention to Saul's visionary experience.

While this explanation is plausible to understand the discrepancy, what is important in relation to our subject of the transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight is that in both Acts 9 and 22 the sudden light only affects Saul by making him blind and further changing his life. Considering the fact that Saul was going to Damascus for the purpose of persecuting the church with authority (9:1-2), it seems reasonable to conjecture that his travel companions were also involved in the persecution[191]; yet differently from Saul whose previous state was exposed as being in the darkness by the blindness, his companions remain unaffected by the light. Regardless of the question whether they also saw the light or heard the voice, the divine revelation did not affect them. Saul's companions thus stand in stark contrast to Saul himself in this scene.[193]

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[190] William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 125; Marguerat, *The First Christians*, 187; Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 72; Pervo, *Acts*, 564.

[191] Pervo, *Acts*, 241 n70.

[193] Gaventa notes that the verb "to see, perceive (θεωρέω)" that Luke uses in 9:7 to denote that Saul's companions did not see anyone, is often used in Luke-Acts in connection with seeing the manifestation of God's activity and understanding the import of the event. Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 59-60. See Lk. 10:18; 24:37, 39; Acts 3:16; 4:13; 7:56; 17:22; 21:20; 27:10; Cf. David M. Stanley, "Paul's Conversion in Acts: Why The Three Accounts?" *CBQ* 15 (1953): 328-29. Stanley takes Luke's accounts on Paul's

After their role as contrasting figures to Saul is completed, they quickly disappear in the narrative.[194]

In Acts 26:4-34, Paul defends himself before King Agrippa II by recounting his encounter with the risen Christ. In this scene, we also find the motif of transition from darkness to light, but not in the same form as in Acts 9 and 22. In 26:9-11, Paul describes his previous life as a persecutor of the church and describes the context of his revelatory event. He says:

> 9 Indeed, I myself thought that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem; having received authority from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. 11 By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was exceedingly enraged/mad at them (περισσῶς τε ἐμμαινόμενος αὐτοῖς), I pursued them even to foreign cities.

In vv.12-22 the description continues about Paul's sudden encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus:

> 12 "With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who were going with me. 14 When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me and speaking in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.' 15 I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness both to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles-- to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they

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blindness at his "conversion" as historically true and even explains Paul's own understanding of his blindness from 2 Cor. 4:6.

[194] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 59-60. Concerning the discrepancy between Acts 9, 22 and Acts 26, refer to Section 2.3.

> may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me (ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κλῆρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ)

What is most distinctive in Acts 26 compared to Acts 9 and 22 is that here Saul seems not to become blind because of his encounter with the risen Christ (v.15). This difference is intriguing since Saul's blindness was one of the most powerful Lukan literary motifs to describe his dramatic change in Acts 9 and 22. In the previous chapters, Saul became blind because of the light and recovered his sight when he learned the true identity of the revelatory figure and the divine plan upon him. Ananias played a significant role in Saul's change because he, not Saul, was the one who learned about the divine plan upon Saul and revealed it to Saul. He was the guiding figure who helped Saul to change his thoughts on Jesus and his mission. In chapter 26, however, Luke presents Saul's conversion story in a form already fully interpreted, as Paul says that he was directly told about his mission in his encounter with the risen Jesus, without any mention of Ananias.[195] In this version of the story, there is no need for Saul to become blind and regain his sight, nor a mediatory figure, because Saul already recognizes Jesus as the Lord and his mission in his revelation.

In Acts 26, the motifs of transition from darkness to light and Saul's blindness are now transposed to describe the change of the Jews and gentiles who newly accept the God and Jesus Christ. The Lukan literary effort to deliberately omit Saul's blindness in recounting his encounter with the risen Christ and then use it to describe "Christian conversion" in general, brings the effect of identifying Paul's experience with other converts, especially with the gentiles. In other words, the description of "conversion" in 26:18, "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light," is exactly what Paul went through in Acts 9 and 22. Then the question we should answer is why Luke

[195] Gaventa, *From Darkness*, 63.

uses these metaphors of darkness-light and blindness to describe Paul's change in Acts 9 and 22, and also the general "Christian conversion" in Acts 26.

3.2. Interpreting Saul's Blindness in Previous Scholarship

Concerning Paul's blindness and the motif of transition from darkness to light in Acts 9, 22, and 26, scholars have come up with different explanations on their meanings and the reason of Luke using them to depict Paul's conversion. Some interpreted this metaphor within the larger interpretive framework of Hebrew prophetic calling in the LXX.[196] This explanation is supported by the observation that Luke tends to be using the LXX extensively in writing Luke-Acts, especially the prophetic tradition in describing Paul's experience.[197] In particular, Segal argues that Luke deliberately followed the calling scene in Ezek. 1:27-2:3 as the parallel scene to Paul's "conversion" in Acts:[198]

> 27 Upward from what appeared like the loins I saw something like gleaming amber, something that looked like fire enclosed all around; and downward from what looked like the loins I saw something that looked like fire, and there was a splendor (τὸ φέγγος) all around. 28 Like the bow in a cloud on a rainy day, such was the appearance of the splendor all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD (δόξης κυρίου). When I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of someone speaking. 2:1 He said to me: O son of man, stand up on your feet (στῆθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου), and I will speak with you…3 He said to me, son of man, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day.

In this passage, as Paul in Acts 9:4, 22:7, and 26:14, the prophet Ezekiel is encompassed by a sudden splendor, falls down, and listens to the divine commandments. Similarities in

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196 Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 9-10.
197 See Section 2.3 for a more detailed discussion.
198 Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 7.

terminologies are also observable, as in both passages the divine voice commands Ezekiel and Saul to "stand up" by using the Greek verb ἵστημι and speaks to them.[199]

One of the unique aspects of Ezekiel's prophecy compared to other prophetic passages such as Isa. 6:1-9 and Jer. 1:5-11 is that here the prophet sees a human-like figure in his vision.[200] This element, which Paul does not use in describing his revelatory experience, is shared by Luke in Acts. In Ezek. 1:26, the prophet says: "…and seated above the likeness of a throne was something that seemed like a human form (ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου ἄνωθεν)." After describing the splendid light surrounding this figure, Ezekiel identifies it as "the glory of the Lord (δόξης κυρίου; v.29)." As a direct parallel, Paul in Acts 22:11 elaborates the light he saw by using the same terminology: "Since I could not see because of the glory/brightness of that light (τῆς δόξης τοῦ φωτὸς ἐκείνου), those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus." Here we see Luke's literary creativity of using the apocalyptic visionary experience of Ezekiel to recast Saul's "conversion" to more like a vivid visionary experience of the divine light.

Based on these similarities and especially the use of the same term δόξης in both texts, Segal argues that Luke describes Paul as having a prophetic experience of the glory of the God called *Kavod* in the Jewish mysticism.[201] While Segal does not go on to interpret the meaning of Saul's blindness in relation to the Jewish mystic tradition, in this context of prophetic calling, Paul's blindness is explained as the result of having a divine epiphany and seeing the glory of the God.[202]

While it is true that Luke is elaborating Paul's experience partly by using the prophetic visionary experience in Ezekiel, there exist important differences in the overall plots and details that make it difficult to interpret Saul's blindness solely in the context of

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[199] Cf. Gen. 21:18; 31:13; 1 Kgs. 17:9; Jon. 1:2.

[200] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 10.

[201] Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 10-11.

[202] For the Greek texts using blindness as the result of a divine epiphany, see Homer, *Vita Romana* 5; Pseudo Plutarch, *Greek and Roman Parallel Stories* 1, 305c.

prophetic calling and simply as the result of a divine epiphany. As noted in Section 2.3, Luke's descriptions of Saul's experience in Acts 9 and 22 do not follow the traditional Hebrew prophetic model. More importantly, in Acts the impact of visionary experience is fundamental to Saul as to make him blind. In the Hebrew prophetic tradition, including Ezekiel, there is no motif of the prophet becoming blind as the result of seeing the divine vision. Luke utilized Ezekiel's vision in depicting Saul's experience, but there are other literary tradition that needs to be considered to understand the meaning and function of Saul's blindness in Acts.

Other scholars interpret Saul's blindness as symbolizing his preparatory state before receiving divine revelation or baptism. For instance, Luke Timothy Johnson interprets Saul's loss of sight and appetite as a preparation for receiving revelation following the OT examples such as Moses in Exod. 34:38, Deut. 9:9, and Daniel in Dan. 9:3.[203] In these passages, Moses and Daniel fast for some period in preparation for divine revelation. Johnson, however, failed to delineate the specific meaning and function of Saul's blindness in this scene. While Acts 9:9 states that Saul "neither ate nor drank," similarly to Moses and Daniel, there is an additional element that was presented first to describe Saul's status that he "was blind for three days," which Johnson does not deal with. This metaphor of radical transition from darkness to light is central in the Lukan descriptions of Saul's experience in that it persists in all three accounts of Acts while other elements are missing or different from each other. Similarly, Conzelmann

[203] Cf. Dan. 10:2-3; 4 Ezra 5:13, 20; 6:31; Bar. 9:2; 12:5; 20:5; Acts 13:1-3 which has the additional element of praying. Johnson, *The Acts*, 164, 168. In his commentary on v. 8 Johnson does not discuss the meaning of Saul's blindness, but finds similarity with the punitive blindness of the magician Elymas in Acts 13:11. In page 168 however, Johnson understands Saul's blindness primarily as a preparatory period for his entry into the messianic community, together with Saul's prayer and fasting. While it is possible that Saul's abstinence from food and drink (v.9) is a form of preparation or a stage of liminality in one's radical transition, Johnson does not explain Saul's blindness in relation to these elements.

interpreted Acts 9:9 in relation to the pre-baptismal fasting tradition as described in *Didache* 7:4 and Justin's A*pology* 1.61.[204] In these texts, however, we only have the element of fasting as the preparation for the baptism, but not the blindness.

Some scholars interpret Saul's blindness as a divine punishment following popular Hellenistic and Jewish literary convention.[205] Typically, in ancient Graeco-Roman texts, blindness was one of the most common types of punishment miracle. For instance, in his *Satires,* Juvenal describes blindness as one of the punishments of Isis.[206] In the Hebrew tradition we also find the motifs of blindness and darkness being employed to describe the divine punishment.[207] For instance, Deut. 28:28-29 says:

> 28 "The LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart; 29 and you shall grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you."

Here a person's state who disobeyed the covenant is described as groping about in darkness as a blind person.[208] Similarly in Isa. 59:1-8, the narrator depicts the Israelites as having been departed from God's justice. In the following verses of vv. 9-10, he compares their state without justice as becoming blind and groping in the darkness, without the God intervening to resolve the situation:

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[204] Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 72.

[205] Hamm, "Paul's Blindness," 70; Johnson, *The Acts*, 164; Pervo, *Acts*, 242; For Greek literature on blindness as a punishment, see Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts*, 68-72.

[206] Juvenal, *Sat.* 13.93-94. Pervo, *Acts,* 242 n.73. Cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.111; Plato, *Phaedr.* 243a; *Aristeas* 316; Ovid, *Tristia ex Ponto* 1.1.51-58; Otto Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder (Giessen: Töpelmann*, 1909), 189-94. For Christian examples, *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* 5.1; *Ethiopian Story* 4.19.

[207] 1 Sam. 2:9.

[208] Cf. Num. 12:9-16; Acts 13:9-11.

> 9 Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us; we wait for light, and lo! there is darkness; and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. 10 We grope like the blind along a wall, groping like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among the vigorous as though we were dead.

In these examples, darkness and blindness are forms of divine punishment, and also metaphors denoting the state where the divine justice and care have left as part of this punishment.

It seems that Luke was also familiar with the literary motif of blindness as a divine punishment, as observed in his description of Bar-Jesus in Acts 13:6-12.[209] Here, the pseudo-prophet Bar-Jesus becomes blind as a divine punishment for his deceit to hinder the Lord's path. Paul curses Bar-Jesus by saying:

> 10 … "Oh full of all guile and all deceit, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not stop making crooked the straight path of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind and unable to see the sun for a time (καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ χεὶρ κυρίου ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ ἔσῃ τυφλὸς μὴ βλέπων τὸν ἥλιον ἄχρι καιροῦ)." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand (χειραγωγούς).

Here Paul punishes Bar-Jesus by saying that he "crooked the straight path of the Lord," as using the expression from Isa. 59:2 which depicts the injustice of the Israelites.[210] We observe the similarities in the Lukan descriptions of Saul and Bar-Jesus in that both were led by another person – with the same term χειραγωγούς as noted above – and stayed in the darkness for a short period time.

Considering the fact that Luke was familiar with the LXX and the popular Greek literature, it seems reasonable to assume that Luke depicts Saul's blindness partly to represent the divine punishment upon his previous misbehaviors. In Acts 9:11, Luke describes that Ananias went to the street called "Straight (Εὐθεῖαν)" to find Saul. While it

[209] Hamm, "Paul's Blindness," 69.

[210] Cf. Isa. 26:9, 33:15, 42:16. Kern, "Paul's Conversion," 75-76; Hamm, "Paul's Blindness," 69.

is possible that this was the historical name of the district in Damascus, this name also symbolically depicts Saul's transition from the "crooked" path to the "straight" as described in Isaiah, that Saul behaved wrongly before God.[211] His blindness is thus in part a divine punishment upon his previous role as a persecutor of the church.

It should be noted, however, the Lukan description of Saul's blindness is different from other ancient texts using blindness/darkness as a divine punishment in that Saul becomes blind because of seeing the light in the first place. Saul's blindness is not just the result of divine punishment but rather a metaphor revealing his true spiritual status as a result of being exposed to the light. Acts is also different from other punishment narratives in that Saul quite soon recovers his sight as learning the truth about Jesus. Related to this element of transition is the presence of a helping figure Ananias. As an intermediary figure, Ananias informs Saul about the true identity of Jesus and the divine plan, thus leading him to join the messianic community of Jesus. In Acts, moreover, Luke does not criticize Saul's prior life as unrighteous but continues to identify Saul's pre-"conversion" state as "blameless" according to the Jewish law, following Paul's own accounts on his previous life before joining the church (Acts 22:1-21; Cf. Gal. 1:11-24; Phil. 3:4-10; 1 Cor. 15:7-11).[212] Saul's problem was that his zeal was pointed to the wrong direction so as to hinder to see the truth. These details in Acts show that Luke stresses the radical transition from darkness to light rather than the divine punishment itself in describing Saul's experience. Saul's blindness is partly a result of his past wrongdoings, but Luke's focus is on Saul's immediate and dramatic turn from blindness to sight.

So far, I have shown that Luke's use of blindness cannot be fully explained by prophetic epiphany, divine punishment, or preparation for revelation or baptism. In fact, it is problematic to interpret this metaphor of transition from darkness/blindness to

[211] Hamm, "Paul's Blindness," 70 n16.
[212] See Section 4.1 for more discussion.

light/sight without considering the larger context of the narrative. As noted in Section 2.3, Saul's experience in Acts 9 is presented between the conversions of the Jews (and also god-fearers; 2:37-42; 3:1-10; 4:4; 8:4-13, 26-40) and right before the conversion of the first gentile Cornelius (10:1-48). Saul belongs to an array of new converts to "Christian" faith in the development of the church. Considering this larger context of Luke listing new converts to the movement, as well as Luke's emphasis on Saul's dramatic change between the before and after the experience, the metaphor of blindness in Acts 9 should be considered in the context of one's radical change. Acts 26 most explicitly uses the metaphor of blindness in relation to "Christian conversion," which also signals that we need to look into other ancient texts that discusses similar spiritual and intellectual change. In the following Section 3.3, I analyze the contrasting metaphors of blindness-sight and darkness-light as used in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish texts which discuss one's radical philosophical and religious change, and see why Luke incorporates these particular tropes to describe Saul's and general "Christian conversion" in Acts.

3.3. "From Darkness to Light" as a Philosophical Turn

In his analysis on the Greek philosophical tradition, Nock argued that a turn to a new philosophical school in the antiquity is radical enough to be termed as "conversion." Similarly to the "conversions" in the Judaism and Christianity, he argued, Greek philosophical schools presented binary paths between the lives of virtue and vice, and for one who has chosen the path of virtue it was required to completely renounce his former way of thinking and living.[213] Philosophers – or those who have turned to the right path – also exhibited strong passion for teaching and guiding others to the same path even as giving up their life.[214] Nock also pointed out that the philosophical terms used to depict

[213] Nock, *Conversion*, 167.
[214] Nock, *Conversion*, 172.

one's radical turn such as ἐπιστρέφω and μετανοέω, were later taken up by the Christians, such as Paul and especially Luke, to describe their notion of "conversion."[215]

In Luke's description of Paul's "conversion," we also find similar literary elements that are used to depict one's radical philosophical turn in the Greek philosophical texts. In the Hellenistic Jewish texts, the gentile conversion is often interpreted and presented as a radical cognitive shift from ignorance to knowledge of the true God. Here we observe Hellenistic Jewish thinkers utilizing the Greek philosophical discourses to present the gentile conversion to Judaism as a philosophical turn. This cognitive turn in the philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish texts is often metaphorized as a turn from darkness/blindness to light/sight, as the following analysis will show.

In the Greek philosophical tradition, blindness was a widespread metaphor for denoting philosophical and moral ignorance. Gaining sight or seeing the light in turn signaled acquirement of the true knowledge and spiritual enlightenment.[216] In fact, the Greek words for "sight" and "knowledge" are semantically linked, as the participle form of the verb οἶδα meaning "to know" is εἰδώς, and the aorist form of the verb ὁράω meaning "to see" is εἶδον.[217] The verb ὁράω also means "to perceive, discern" with the mind, thus overlapping with the verb οἶδα in meaning.[218]

Plato's allegory of the cave is one of the most prominent examples of using the transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight as denoting a radical philosophical transformation.[219] Here the prisoner, while he thinks that he knows the reality, is actually seeing the shadow of the truth. Sitting in the darkness from his childhood and not

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[215] Nock, *Conversion* 179. For ἐπιστρέφω, see Plato, *Rep.* 518d; For μετανοέω, see Poimandres, *Tract.*, 28.

[216] Ménandez-Moratalla, *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke*, 58-59.

[217] Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness*, 73.

[218] James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 439, 455.

[219] Plato, *Rep.* 7.514a-515d.

knowing the bright light outside, the prisoner lacks true knowledge of the reality (514a-515c). Socrates compares philosophical education as leading up a person from darkness of the cave to the light. In 514a, he says:

> Next, then, compare the effect of education and that of the lack of it on our nature to an experience like this. Imagine human beings living in an underground, cavelike dwelling, with an entrance a long way up that is open to the light and as wide as the cave itself. They have been there since childhood, with their necks and legs fettered, so that they are fixed in the same place, able to see only in front of them, because their fetter prevents them from turning their heads around.[220]

When the person is released from the bond and walks up the cave, the sudden encounter of light causes temporary blindness to him/her:

> Consider, then, what being released from their bonds and cured of their foolishness would naturally be like, if something like this should happen to them. When one was freed and suddenly compelled to stand up, turn his neck around, walk, and look up toward the light, he would be pained by doing all these things and be unable to see the things whose shadows he had seen before, because of the flashing lights. (515d)

In Socrates' discussion, temporary blindness has two functions: to reveal the person's previous ignorant, i.e., his/her purblind condition of the eyes that s/he mistakenly thought to be sound and seeing the reality, and to provide the person some period of time for adjusting to the brightness of the light (516b). Socrates further discusses the natural path of the one who turned (στρέφειν; *Rep.* 518c; 515e-516a) from darkness to light, that

[220] For the English translation, I followed Plato, *Republic. Volume 2. Books 6-10* (ed. and trans. Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy, Cambridge: Harvard University, 2013). Also in 7.518b-c, shift from blindness to sight denotes gaining the true knowledge. Criticizing some false teachers, Socrates says: "Then here is how we must think about these matters, if that is true: education is not what some people boastfully declare it to be. They presumably say they can put knowledge into souls that lack it, as if they could put sight into blind eyes." Also see *Rep.* 6.508d-e; *Gorg.* 479b.

he guides other prisoners to follow the same path as himself by passing them the wisdom (516c-d).

In the later Stoics, blindness continues to denote the lack of true philosophical knowledge. For instance, Seneca compares a blind clown to a person philosophically and spiritually ignorant:

> You know Harpasté, my wife's female clown; she has remained in my house, a burden incurred from a legacy…Now this clown suddenly became blind. The story sounds incredible, but I assure you that it is true: she does not know that she is blind. She keeps asking her attendant to change her quarters; she says that her apartments are too dark… You can see clearly that that which makes us smile in the case of Harpasté happens to all the rest of us; nobody understands that he is himself greedy, or that he is covetous…The evil that afflicts us is not external, it is within us, situated in our very vitals… (*Ep.* 50.2-4)[221]

Here similarly to Plato, a person's ignorance concerning truth about life is compared to a blind clown who does not even recognize his true physical status. Another later philosopher Plutarch, also notes that before a person achieves virtue and becomes a sage, everyone is considered to be blind despite whether he/she is closer or far away from achieving it. He says:

> …and just as the blind are blind even if they are going to recover their sight a little later, so those who are making progress continue to be stupid and depraved until they have attained virtue.[222]

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[221] For the English translation, see Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales* (trans. Richard M. Gummere; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1917).

[222] Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1063a. Plato also used the metaphor of eye turning from the darkness of ignorance to the bright light to describe the soul's enlightenment. *Rep.* 518c, 515e-516a. Plato also introduced the idea that virtues are forms of knowledge that can be taught, see *Meno.* 87c-d; 361b; Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 7.92-3; Philo, *Det*. 18; *Congr*. 142.

Here realizing the true philosophy and becoming a sage is depicted as a blind man recovering his sight. Plutarch further depicts the students of philosophy as having "seen a great light, as though a shrine were opened."[223]

The topos of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight also appears in the Hellenistic texts as being fully incorporated into the narrative, as the characters actually experience physical transformation from darkness/blindness to light/sight as does Saul in Acts.

In the *Tabula of Cebes*, a text dating sometime between 1st BCE to 1st CE, the main narrator, an old man, introduces the text as expounding the "Pythagorean and Parmenidean" philosophy which was transmitted by a man who was "sensible (ἔμφρων)" and "exceptional in wisdom (δεινὸς περὶ σοφίαν)." (II.2)[224] In this text, philosophical "conversion" is characterized as one's radical cognitive shift from what a person falsely believed to be happiness to a new true philosophy. This radical shift is possible by encountering repentance and realizing one's former ignorance and misperception about life and happiness.

The text begins with an old man explaining the inquirers about the meaning of a painting in a tablet found in the temple of Cronus. In the beginning of his speech, the old man presents binary options for the audience, by saying:

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[223] Plutarch, *Virt. prof*. 81d-e; cf. Seneca, *Ep*. 90.26-29.

[224] Concerning the date and authorship, refer to Fitzgerald and White, John T. Fitzgerald and L. Michael White, *The Tabula of Cebes* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 1-4. I followed Fitzgerald and White's English translation. Scholars debate over the philosophical school behind the *Tabula*, an issue which I do not discuss here. Fitzgerald and White favor a Stoic background for this text. Refer to Fitzgerald and White, *The Tabula*, 20-7. For the discussion on the philosophical conversion in the *Tabula*, also see Nock, *Conversion*, 180.

> If you pay attention and understand what is said, you will be wise and happy. If, on the other hand, you do not, you will become foolish, unhappy, sullen, and stupid, and you will fare badly in life. (III.2)

The new philosophical teaching forces one to choose between two binary options of right and wrong.[225]

The tablet depicts human life as three concentric circles, as each circle representing the domain of deception, False Education (Ψευδοπαιδεία), and the innermost circle of True Education (ἀλήθης παιδεία). When people enter the first circle of life, they all face a woman called "Deceit (Ἀπάτη)" and drink "error (πλάνος)" and "ignorance (ἄγνοια)" that she gives (V.3). Because of this drink, as entering to the realm of False Education all people are led astray by other women called "Opinions (Δόξαι)," "Desires (Ἐπιθυμίαι)," and "Pleasures (Ἡδοναί)." (V.3) In this domain some are given false happiness from a woman called "Fortune (Τύχη)," while others, not having received good fortune or being deprived of the fortune they use to have before, endlessly search for what they erroneously believe to be happiness (VII.1-VIII.4). What makes people to have false opinions, desires, and pleasures, according to this text, is their erroneous cognitive status with deception, error, ignorance, and false education.

It is intriguing to note here that the depiction of "Fortune," who governs the realm of "False Education" and makes people wander endlessly in search for the wrong happiness, is "blind and mad, but deaf as well (οὐ μόνον τυφλὴ καὶ μαινομένη ἀλλὰ καὶ κωφή; VII.1)." As being blind, mad, and deaf, "Fortune" makes her way everywhere and randomly snatches and gives possessions from one person to another. As people follow the random gift of the blind "Fortune," they are also metaphorized as being blind, mad, and deaf.

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[225] Nock, *Conversion*, 167.

While most people suffer in this realm, few chance to encounter a woman called "Repentance (Μετάνοια; X.4-XI.1)," – which I will discuss further in Section 4.3. Here it suffices to say that "Repentance" releases people from "False Education" and ignorance, and leads them to "True Education" and knowledge of the true happiness. The motif of transition from darkness to light appears as the text describes the realm of "True Education," contrastingly from the realm of "False Education" which was governed by the blind Fortune, as "beautiful, grassy, and brilliantly lit (καλός τε εἶναι καὶ λειμωνοειδὴς καὶ φωτὶ πολλῷ καταλαμπόμενος; XVII.1)." In this text, we see the radical philosophical transformation through true education and acquirement of the true knowledge is depicted as a transition from the realm of darkness to light.

In the *Tabula*, one's encounter with repentance and true education brings a radical cognitive shift, i.e., the acceptance of a new philosophical teaching about virtues and happiness at the complete expense of false ideas and teachings he/she previous held. According to Nock and his definition of "conversion," this is a form of radical change that can be identified as "conversion" in antiquity. As the old man, who himself acquired the truth from another person now expounding the philosophy to the curious inquirers (I.1-III.1), we see that the philosophical ideal of a teacher figure is also operating in this narrative.

In another Hellenistic philosophical text, Lucian's *Letter to Nigrinus*, which dates to the 2nd century CE, Lucian illustrates his conversion to a Platonic philosophical thought as recovering his eyesight.[226] In this text, Lucian narrates to his friend about his encounter with a philosopher Nigrinus who dramatically changed his view on life and happiness.[227]

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[226] The numbers in parenthesis are page numbers from the translation by A. M. Harmon, *Lucian: Volume I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913). I followed Harmon's translation.

[227] For the discussion on reading *Letter to Nigrinus* as a conversion narrative within the Greco-Roman philosophical context, refer to Nancy Shumate, *Crisis and*

The story begins as Lucian travels to Rome because of his troubling eyes; Lucian says: "…I made straight for Rome, wanting to see an oculist; for I was having more and more trouble with my eye (τὸ γάρ μοι πάθος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ μᾶλλον ἐπετείνετο; 101)." Here Lucian does not know the reason of his eye problems. Before seeing the ocultist, Lucian chances to visit the Platonic philosopher Nigrinus, and while conversing with him he goes through a dramatic overturn of his eyes and thoughts. Nigrinus enlightens Lucian with his philosophy, which was in radical contrast to the worldly view that Lucian formerly held:

> …praise philosophy and the freedom that it gives, and to ridicule the things that are popularly considered blessings – wealth and reputation, dominion and honor, yes and purple and gold – things accounted very desirable by most men, and till then by me also. (103)

After hearing his exposition on this philosophy, Lucian experiences suffering in his thought, but soon comes to accept the philosophy and undergoes a radical transformation:[228]

> A divine utterance! For he went on to praise philosophy and the freedom that it gives, and to ridicule the things that are popularly considered blessings – wealth and reputation, dominion and honour, yes and purple and gold – things accounted very desirable by most men, and till then by me also. I took it all in with eager, wide-open soul, andat the moment I couldn't imagine what had come over me; I was all confused. Then I felt hurt (ἐλυπούμην) because he had criticized what was dearest to me – wealth and money and reputation, – and I all but cried over their downfall; (103) and then I thought them paltry and ridiculous, and was glad to be looking up, as it were, out of the murky atmosphere of my past life to a clear sky and a great light (ἔχαιρον δ᾽ αὖ ὥσπερ ἐκ ζοφεροῦ τινος ἀέρος τοῦ βίον τοῦ πρόσθεν ἐς αἰθρίαν τε καὶ μέγα φῶς ἀναβλέπων). In consequence, I actually

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Conversion in Apuleius' Metamorphoses (Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1996), 30-33.

[228] Mourning and grief is a common element accompanying one's repentance in the conversion process. Cf. Acts 2:38; *Letter to Nigrinus*, 135; 2 Cor. 7:8-11. For a fuller discussion, see Section 4.3.

> forgot my eye and its ailment – would you believe it? – and by degrees grew sharper-sighted in my soul (τὴν δὲ ψθχὴν ὀξυδερκέστερος κατὰ μικρὸν): which, all unawares (ἐγιγνόμην), I had been carrying about in a purblind (τυφλώττουσαν) condition till then. (104)

In this description of Lucian's transformation, his eye illness is a symbol that represents Lucian's true spiritual status. Lucian says that because of his encounter with the philosophy, his soul grew sharper-sighted, and here Lucian's physical eyes reflect his spiritual condition. Without knowing the actual cause of the problem he is having with his eyes, he left for the journey. As he unexpectedly encounters the guide to the true philosophical truth and learns it, however, his eyes are suddenly cured to see the light and there is no need to see the occultist any more. After learning the philosophical truth Lucian now evaluates his pre-transformation status as being in "purblind" condition, which means that he could not see the light clearly.[229]

In Acts 9:8, Luke describes Saul's blindness as "though his eyes were open, he could see nothing (ἀνεῳγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἔβλεπεν)." In Acts 22:11, although the terminology is different as that "he could not see (οὐκ ἐνέβλεπον)," Luke still describes Saul as having a troubling eyes. From the external appearance, similarly to those of Lucian, Saul's eyes had no problem. As describing Saul's blindness, however, Luke identifies his actual spiritual status, that he could not see the truth about Jesus. It is only when Ananias helped Saul to realize this truth, as Nigrinus did for Lucian, that Saul finally recovered his sight and realized the truth.

In Hellenistic Jewish texts, we also see this philosophical motif of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight being deployed to identify the gentile acceptance of the Jewish God as a radical philosophical turn.

The Jewish philosopher Philo, a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher in Alexandria and whose works dating to early first century CE, incorporated this metaphor to designate the

[229] See Plato, *Rep*. 514a.

conversion of the gentiles and elaborated on its meaning in particular relation to the accompanied radical cognitive change.[230] As a person who received Greek education and fluent in Greek language and philosophy, Philo reinterpreted Jewish religiosity and traditions in relation to the Greek philosophy. In his treatise called *On the Virtues*, he describes the pre-conversion state of the gentiles as being "blind" and the gentile conversion as the recovery of their sights:[232]

> 178 … On which account he [Moses] calls to him all persons of such a disposition as this, and initiates them in his laws, holding out to them admonitions full of reconciliation and friendship, which exhort men to practice sincerity and to reject pride, and to cling to truth and simplicity, those most necessary virtues which, above all others, contribute to happiness; forsaking all the fabulous inventions of foolish men (μυθικῶν πλασμάτων κατεξαναστάντας, ἅπερ ἐκ πρώτης ἡλικίας), which their parents, and nurses, and instructors, and innumerable other persons with whom they have been associated, have from their earliest infancy impressed upon their tender souls (ἀπαλαῖς ἔτι ψυχαῖς), implanting in them inextricable errors/deceptions (πλάνον ἀνήνυτον) concerning the knowledge of the most excellent of all things. 179 And what can this best of all things be except God? whose honors those men have attributed to beings which are not gods, honoring them beyond all reason and moderation (πλέον τοῦ μετρίου), and, like empty minded people that they are, wholly forgetting him (τοῦ δὲ εἰς ἅπαν οἱ κενοὶ φρενῶν ἐκλαθόμενοι). All those men therefore who, although they did not originally choose to honor the Creator and Father of the universe, have yet changed and done so afterwards, having learnt to prefer to honor a single monarch rather than a number of rulers, we must look upon as our friends and kinsmen,

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[230] For a general discussion on Philo's concept of gentile conversion, see Fernando Méndez-Moratalla, *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 24-35; For Philo's use of the notion of repentance, see Nave, *The Role of Repentance*, 85; Cf. Ronald Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Philo* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1989).

[232] For the general purpose of the treatise as a Jewish apologetic text, see Walter T. Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria On Virtues: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 20-21, 23-37. Wilson notes that Philo is using the Stoic metaphor of blindness in this passage. See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria*, 368. For the English translation, I followed Younge. See Philo of Alexandria, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (trans. C. D. Yonge; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993).

> since they display that greatest of all bonds with which to cement friendship and kindred, namely, a pious and God-loving disposition, and we ought to sympathize in joy with and to congratulate them, since even if they were blind previously they have now received their sight, beholding the most brilliant of all lights instead of the most profound darkness (καθάπερ ἂν εἰ καὶ τυφλοὶ πρότερον ὄντες ἀνέβλεψαν ἐκ βαθυτάτου σκότους αὐγοειδέστατον φῶς ἰδόντες).

In this passage, Philo describes gentile conversion as a radical cognitive shift which abandons previous false ideas about God and learning to prefer to honor the right God. As Plato who blamed the false education from their childhood as blinding their eyes to see the true light outside, Philo blames the wrong education as what prevented gentiles from having "the knowledge of the most excellent of all things," i.e., the knowledge of the true monotheistic God. He says that "all the fabulous inventions of foolish men" contaminated the souls of gentiles from their infancy and implanted in them "inextricable errors/deceptions." It is because of their ignorance and deception that the gentiles worship the fabricated gods "beyond all reason and moderation."[233] This pre-conversion status of the gentiles is compared as being blind, in "profound darkness," and "empty-minded" as having totally forgotten about the God.[234]

In his another treatise *On Abraham* 1:70, Philo uses this motif of transition from darkness to light to describe the prototypical Abraham as having a radical cognitive shift:

> "The man who had been bred up in this doctrine, and who for a long time had studied the philosophy of the Chaldaeans, as if suddenly awakening from a deep slumber and opening the eye of the soul, and beginning to perceive a pure ray of light instead of profound darkness, followed the light, and saw what he had never

[233] In this passage, Philo seems to have Plato's *Republica* in mind, which describes the ideal sort of education. In *Republica* nurses and mothers should not expose their children to μῦθοι that conveys false image of gods (377d). Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria*, 367.

[234] As I will discuss in Section 4.3, Philo in the following discourse elaborates the turning of the gentiles to the Judaism also with the special philosophical terminologies denoting repentance.

> seen before (ὥσπερ ἐκ βαθέος ὕπνου διοίξας τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα καὶ καθαρὰν αὐγὴν ἀντὶ σκότους βαθέος βλέπειν ἀρξάμενος ἠκολουθησε τῷ φέγγει καὶ κατεῖδεν, ὅ μὴ πρότερον ἐθεάσατο), a certain governor and director of the world standing above it, and guiding his own work in a salutary manner, and exerting his care and power in behalf of all those parts of it which are worthy of divine superintendence."

Philo describes that Abraham as having been immersed with the erroneous philosophy of the Chaldaeans, which impiously compares "the creature to the Creator (Abr. 1:69)." Abraham then suddenly experiences a religious and also philosophical enlightenment which is described as the opening of his eyes and radical transition from "profound darkness (σκότους βαθέος)" to "light (φέγγει)." By using this motif of darkness-light, Philo thus assimilates the experiences of Abraham and gentiles, and presents both as a radical philosophical transformation.

We see the similar use of the metaphor of blindness in Paul's letters to designate pre-conversion status of the gentiles. In Rom. 2:17-24, Paul criticizes the Jews who fail to perform the role as guides for the gentiles. He describes the gentiles as "the blind," "who are in darkness," "the foolish" who needs correction, and "children" who need instructions (vv.19-20):

> 17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God 18 and know his will and determine what is best because you are instructed in the law, 19 and if you are confident that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness (πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει), 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the form of knowledge and truth, 21 you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You that boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 For, as it

> is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."[235]

It seems that Paul had Isa. 42:1-17 specifically in mind in formulating this passage, which is in line with his general tendency of using the Hebrew prophetic tradition in describing his own calling for the gentiles:[236]

> 1 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations… 6 I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations (εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν), 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness (ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς τυφλῶν, ἐξαγαγεῖν ἐκ δεσμῶν δεδεμένους καὶ ἐξ οἴκου φυλακῆς καθημένους ἐν σκότει). 8 I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols…16 I will lead the blind by a road they do not know, by paths they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground (ποιήσω αὐτοῖς τὸ σκότος εἰς φῶς καὶ τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθεῖαν). These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them. 17 They shall be turned back and utterly put to shame-- those who trust in carved images, who say to cast images, "You are our gods."

Isa. 42:1-17 belongs to what some scholars have identified as the "suffering servant song," together with Isa. 49:1-7, 50:4-11, and 52:13-53:12. Here "servant" denotes the nation Israel, as indicated by Isa. 44:1-2 which refers to the servant as "Jacob" and

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[235] Cf. Mt. 15:14; 23:16, 24; Lk. 6:39; Jn. 9:40-41. In these examples, we see similar criticism on the blind guides, which Jewett notes that the precise background of this polemic has not yet discovered. I think that the Stoic philosophical use of this metaphor lies behind Paul's use. Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 225. Cf. Heinrich Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 84; Klaus Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus and die Römer* (Leipzig: Evangelisches Verlagsanstalt, 1999), 68; Otto Michel, *Der Brief and die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 129; Timothy W. Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Roman 2:17-29* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 123-4.

[236] Also Isa. 52:5.

"Israel," the names designating the nation Israel as a whole. Here Israel is presented as a guide who leads the gentiles from darkness to light (vv.6-7).

What is interesting is that Paul used Isaiah passage with a philosophical twist, as interpreting the contrast between darkness and light as lacking or possessing the true knowledge of the God. Paul also stresses the role of the guide in the process and identifies the Jews as the philosophical guides in the process of conversion. Stanley Stowers has rightly noted Paul's general use of philosophical rhetoric in his passage that supports my analysis. He says, "If the reference to a Jew were changed to a Stoic…, then this text would be a classic example of indictment of the pretentious philosopher."[237] For instance, the phrase in v.17 "but if you call yourself a Jew" exhibits the similar formulation with Epictetus, "but if you are not able to do this … (εἰ δὲ σὺ μὴ δύνασαι...; *Diss.* 1.25.5)," and has the similar nuance as "why, then, do you call yourself a Stoic (τί οὖν Στωικὸν λέγεις σεαωτόν), why do you deceive the multitude….(*Diss.* 2.9.19)." The emphatic, diatribal use of σὺ in v.17 is what we also find more than 250 times in Epitetus.[238] The topos of claiming common cultural identity that one fails to follow was well known among philosophical circles.[239] Similarly to Philo, here Paul depicts the gentile conversion as a cognitive shift from a wrong form of piety to a right one, particularly by employing the philosophical motif of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight.[240]

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[237] Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Chico: Scholars, 1981), 112.

[238] Jewett, *Romans*, 221.

[239] See Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.9.19-21. For other philosophical language that Paul uses in this passage, see Jewett, *Romans,* 223-24.

[240] In 2 Cor. 4:1-6, Paul further uses these metaphors to contrast those who accept the gospel and who do not. The latter are described as being blinded in their minds, and the former as seeing the light. Here the light is specified as the right knowledge of Christ and the God (vv.4, 6) and blindness as a metaphor of not knowing it (v.6): "1 Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or

Whereas this motif was used mostly abstractly in the discussions of Philo and Paul, in some Hellenistic Jewish novels on gentile conversion, we see the gentiles physically experiencing the blindness in the process of their conversion to Judaism, as Saul did in Acts.

2 Maccabees, dating to the 1st century BCE,[241] illustrates a case where a gentile realizes the power of the Jewish God and becomes a proclaimer of the Jewish monotheistic religiosity.[242] In 2 Macc. 3:1-40, Heliodorus, a legate of Seleucus IV Philopator, plans to rob the Temple according to the king's order (vv.13-21). As he arrives in the Temple, he and his companions encounter a magnificent epiphany of the God (vv.24-28):

> 24 But when he arrived at the treasury with his bodyguard, then and there the Sovereign of spirits and of all authority caused so great a manifestation that all who had been so bold as to accompany him (πάντας τοὺς κατατολμήσαντας

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to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds (ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα) of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ), who is the image of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ (ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ)."

[241] Harold W. Attridge, *The HarperCollins Study Bible*. Rev. ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 1519-20. I followed English translation by Attridge.

[242] The similarity in narrative structure between Paul's conversion in Acts and the Heliodorus in 2 Macc. has already been noted by H. Windisch. However, he did not go in depth to analyze how various motifs are functioning similarly in the two narratives, especially the motifs of darkness and light. Hans Windisch, "Die Christusepiphanie vor Damascus (Acts 9, 22 und 26) und ihre religionsgeschichtlichen Parallelen," *ZNW* 31 (1962): 1-23.

> συνελθεῖν) were astounded by the power of God, and became faint with terror.[243] 25 For there appeared to them a magnificently caparisoned horse, with a rider of frightening mien; it rushed furiously at Heliodorus and struck at him with its front hoofs. Its rider was seen to have armor and weapons of gold. 26 Two young men also appeared to him, remarkably strong, gloriously beautiful and splendidly dressed, who stood on either side of him and flogged him continuously, inflicting many blows on him. 27 When he suddenly fell to the ground and deep darkness came over him, his men took him up, put him on a stretcher, 28 and carried him away – this man who had just entered the aforesaid treasury with a great retinue and all his bodyguard but was now unable to help himself. They recognized clearly the sovereign power of God.

In this passage, the darkness that fell upon Heliodorus (v.27), together with the heavenly figures punishing Heliodorus (v.26), may be interpreted as a form of divine punishment as observed in some ancient texts discussed above.[244] Consideration of the larger context and the details of the narrative rather indicate that darkness in this passage is also a metaphor showing the spiritual state of the gentile Heliodorus before he recognizes the supreme God.

First to note is the text's stress on the robustness of Heliodorus and those accompanied him in the robbery of the Temple. In 2 Macc. 3:12-13, Heliodorus learns that there is no legitimate ground for confiscating the Temple, but proceeds to do it because it is the order from the king. Without proper knowledge of the living Jewish God, Heliodorus subordinates to the power of the human being. In the following scene, 3:23-24, the narrator describes Heliodorus as a robust person who is determined to execute the confiscation regardless of the Jewish protest, and depicts his companions as "so bold as to accompany (πάντας τοὺς κατατολμήσαντας συνελθεῖν)" Heliodorus. The illustration of

[243] In the ancient texts on religious and philosophical conversion, boldness is often the result of one's ignorance. See Lucian, *Letter to Nigrinus*, 99: "So I may fairly be acquitted even of the charge contained in Thucydides' saying that ignorance makes men bold, but discourse cautious…"

[244] See Section 3.2.

Heliodorus and his companies overlaps with Lukan description of Saul as a daring persecutor who behaved without hesitance, but also without true knowledge.

In vv. 24-25, Heliodorus suddenly encounters the glorious manifestation of divine entities. Further similarities between the descriptions of 2 Maccabees and Acts are noticeable in this scene. As Saul who became blind because of the sudden light and was carried along by his companions (Acts 9:8), Heliodorus is covered by the darkness and carried away with help of the others (v. 28). As Saul who stopped eating and drinking (9:9), Heliodorus "lay prostrate, speechless because of the divine intervention and deprived of any hope of recovery (v. 29)." Here the metaphor of "deep darkness (πολλῷ σκότει)" in v. 27 does not necessarily suggest that Heliodorus became unable to see as Saul, but it is noticeable that in both cases darkness overpowers them after their encounter with the divine manifestation, thus exposing their true spiritual conditions which are in stark contrast to their previous bold behaviors. As in Saul's case where his companions were not affected permanently by the sudden epiphany, here his companions who also participated in the robbery, are not affected by the vision (vv.24, 28). It is only Saul and Heliodorus who were profoundly affected by the epiphany so as to recognize their ignorance and further experience radical transformations.

Finally, we observe the text's emphasis on the quick and radical change of Heliodorus with his transition from darkness to light, rather than on the severity of the punishment upon this gentile who did not recognize the Jewish God. We also see the presence of the helping figures who guide Heliodorus to recover his sight and acknowledge the true God, the high priest Onias and the heavenly messengers. In 2 Macc. 3:32-33, Onias offers sacrifice for Heliodorus' recovery and while this ritual is being made Heliodorus sees another vision of the same young men who previously appeared to him, and they inform him explicitly about the power of God and his future mission:

> 33 While the high priest was making an atonement, the same young men appeared again to Heliodorus dressed in the same clothing, and they stood and said, "Be very grateful to the high priest Onias, since for his sake the Lord has granted you your life. 34 And see that you, who have been flogged by heaven, report to all people the majestic power of God." Having said this they vanished.

As Saul dramatically changed from a persecutor of the church to the proclaimer of Jesus through his experience from blindness to sight, Heliodorus changes from a plunderer of the Temple to the proclaimer of the Jewish God through his experience. 2 Macc. 3:36 says: "He [Heliodorus] bore testimony to all concerning the deeds of the supreme God, which he had seen with his own eyes."

Comparing a gentile's dramatic religious shift to a transition from darkness to light is also found more explicitly in an anonymous apocryphal text, the *Joseph and Aseneth*.[245] This text describes a gentile woman Aseneth's conversion from idolatry to the monotheistic religiosity. While this text is often considered as a Hellenistic Jewish text written sometime between about 100 BCE and 135 CE, scholars still argue on the exact date and its Jewish authorship. For instance, based on the observations that there is no ancient attestation of this text, we have no manuscripts dating earlier than the fourth century CE, and that all the extant manuscripts are manifestly Christian, Ross S. Kraemer argues for a later date to the third century CE or later and potential Christian authorship.[246]

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[245] Concerning the different recensions and scholarly discussion on this topic, see Ross Shepard Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph: A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and his Egyptian Wife, Reconsidered* (New York: Oxford University, 1998), 6-9. I followed the English translation by C. Burchard in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 2:202-47, but corrected some translation as referring to the Greek text presented by Philonenko. M. Philonenko, *Joseph et Aséneth: introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par Marc Philonenko* (Leiden : Brill, 1968)

[246] Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 225-44. On the earlier date to 100 BCE and 135 CE, see Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 187-88. Burchard argues for an earlier date to as early as the first century BCE and no later than 100 CE. C.

While the exact date and authorship of the text remains uncertain, the possibility that this text could have been written contemporaneously or slightly later than Acts, i.e., well within the period of the developing church and its literature, and also the possibility that it was written by a Christian author, makes *Joseph and Aseneth* a nice comparative example to Acts. In both texts we observe the authors' literary efforts in elaborating a person's religious change by freely incorporating the philosophical terminologies in their narratives.

In this text, a gentile woman Aseneth hears that her parents wish to marry her with a Jewish man named Joseph. She gets furious because she believed the false rumors about Joseph that he is a wretched shepherd's son, fugitive, and sleeping with his mistress (4:9-12).[248] When Aseneth actually sees the sight of glorious Joseph, however, she immediately realizes her erroneous judgment and regrets:

> 1 And Aseneth saw Joseph on his chariot and was strongly cut to her soul, and her gut was crushed (κατενύγηἰσχυρῶς τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ συνεκλάσθη τὰ σπλὰγχνα αὐτῆς)[249], and her knees were paralyzed, and her entire body trembled, and she was filled with great fear. And she sighed and said in her heart: 2 "What shall I now do, wretched (that I am)? Did I not speak saying that Joseph is coming, the shepherd's son from the land of Canaan? And now, behold, the sun from heaven has come to us on its chariot and entered our house today, and shines in it like a light upon the earth. 3 But I, ignorant and daring (ἄφρων καὶ θρασεῖα), have despised him and spoken wicked words about him, and did not know that Joseph is (a) son of God 4 For who among men on earth will generate such beauty, and what womb of a woman will give birth to such light? What a wretched and foolish (girl) I (am), because I have spoken wicked words about him to my father. 5 And

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Burchard, *Untersuchungen zu Joseph und Aseneth* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1965), 148-51. For an argument for the Christian authorship, see P. Batiffol, "Le Livre de la Prière d' Aseneth," in *Studia patristica: Etudes d' ancienne littérature chrétienne* (Paris" Leroux, 1889-90), 37; for an in-depth discussion, see Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 245-85.

[248] Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 24.

[249] Note the same terminology with Acts 2:37 in describing the reaction of the Jews as they listened to Peter's speech: "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart (Ἀκούσαντες δὲ κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν) and said…"

> now, where shall I go and hide from his face in order that Joseph the son of God does not see me because I have spoken wicked (things) about him? 6 And where shall I flee and hide, because every hiding place, he sees and nothing hidden escapes him, because of the great light that is inside him? 7 And now be gracious on me, Lord, God of Joseph, because I have spoken wicked words against him in ignorance (διότι λελάληκα ἐγὼ ῥήματα πονηρὰ ἐν ἀγνοία) (6:1-7)[250]

Here, as seeing Joseph who is described as the "sun" and "light (v.2)," the gentile woman Aseneth regrets her previous wicked words about Joseph which was the result of her ignorance and deception by rumors.[251] The unexpected sight of Joseph reveals the true state of Aseneth's soul as being ignorant and makes her to realize her previous mistakes due to that ignorance.[252] In this text, Aseneth's ignorance is emphasized through her repeated confession in v.3 and v.7. In particular, the phrase "foolish and daring" in v.3 is identical to the LXX of Prov. 9:12-13, where the ignorance is contrasted with wisdom:

> 12 If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it. 13 An ignorant and daring woman (γυνὴ ἄφρων καὶ θρασεῖα), who knows not modesty, comes to want a morsel.

Another element that appears both in Acts and *Joseph and Aseneth* is the guiding figure of Ananias and Joseph. Aseneth acknowledged her previous ignorance and the fault of worshipping the idols, but does not know what to do and begs Joseph for help. Now Joseph prays to the God for her conversion in 8:10-9:1:

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[250] The shorter version of the text has switched verses but the basic contents are similar.

[251] Cf. Also see 6:6 for describing Joseph as a light.

[252] R. Kraemer has rightly noted that *Joseph and Aseneth* identifies Aseneth both as the representation of ignorance and wisdom throughout its whole narrative. She begins as a person of ignorance, but through her subsequent recognition of her ignorance, receiving the right knowledge, and repenting, she becomes an impersonation of wisdom. See Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 22-27 for a rich and detailed analysis on this characterization, especially in consideration with other Jewish texts such as Proverbs and Sirach.

> 8:10 Lord God of my father Israel, the Most High, the Powerful One of Jacob, who gave life to all (things) and called (them) from the darkness to the light, and from the error to the truth (καλέσας ἀπὸ τοῦ σκότους εἰς τὸ φῶς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς πλάνης εἰς τὴν ἀλήθειαν), and from the death to the life, you, Lord, bless this virgin, and renew her by your spirit…and number her among your people." 9:1 And Aseneth rejoiced exceedingly with great joy over Joseph's blessing…And she wept with great and bitter weeping and repented of her (infatuation with the) gods whom she used to worship, and spurned all the idols, and waited for the evening to come."[253]

Similarly to Ananias who taught Saul about Jesus and guided him to be freed from the blindness, and the high priest Onias and the heavenly messengers who helped Heliodorus, Joseph reveals to Aseneth about the supreme Creator God and guides her to convert to monotheism (9:10). In addition, as Saul's recovery of sight was followed by his repentance and rituals that manifest his repentance, in this passage Aseneth repents as she learns about the supreme God and her previous mistakes of idol worship. This element of Aseneth's repentance continues in the following narratives of 10:1-14:15, which I will discuss in depth in the next chapter.[254]

After all, Aseneth finally becomes a convert who is now suitable to become Joseph's wife, and she thanks God as saying: "Blessed is the Lord God, who sent you to

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[253] Joseph reveals Aseneth's errant religiosity and the truth about the monotheistic God in his refusal to marry Aseneth. See *Joseph and Aseneth* 8:5-6: "And Joseph said, "It is not fitting for a man who worships God, who will bless with his mouth the living God and eat blessed bread of life and drink a blessed cup of immortality and anoint himself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility to kiss a strange woman who will bless with her mouth dead and dumb idols and eat from their table bread of strangulation and drink from their libation a cup of insidiousness and anoint herself with ointment of destruction."

[254] As listening to Joseph's prayer, Aseneth is filled with joy and fear, and "she wept with great and bitter weeping and repented (μετανοεῖ) of her (infatuation with the) gods whom she used to worship, and spurned all the idols... (9:1-2)" In this text, Aseneth's turning away from her previous misconception about idolatry is clearly defined as repentance. In the *Joseph and Aseneth*, repentance also appears as the heavenly counterpart of Aseneth, the impersonated wisdom. See 15:7-8; Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 26.

deliver me from darkness and to lead me up into the light." (15.13) In this passage of Aseneth's confession the narrator succinctly describes the gentile conversion as a radical cognitive transition from darkness to light. Similar motif is also found in Joseph's confession when he acknowledges the divine power in his prayer: "The one who made all things alive, and called them darkness into the light, and from error into truth, and from death to life (8.10)." Here we see the identification of darkness, error, death versus light, truth, and life.

3.4. Conclusion

As argued in Chapter 2, it is Luke who made Paul a "convert" through the descriptions in Acts, as someone who went through an unexpected radical transformation that quickly and thoroughly changed his thoughts and life. Despite the discrepancies in details in three accounts of Acts 9, 22, and 26 on Paul's "conversion," one of the literary tropes Luke consistently used was the metaphor of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight, which I discussed in this chapter. In Acts 9 and 22, Luke applied this motif to Saul himself, while in Acts 26 to the "Christian conversion" in general.

Although this motif denotes variety of meanings in the ancient literature, it was rarely analyzed in consideration of the larger plot and purpose of Acts, or in relation to other literary details that often accompanied it. Explanations on Saul's blindness as a divine punishment, a result of experiencing prophetic epiphany, or a symbol for the preparatory period before baptism or revelation, cannot adequately analyze Luke's use of this motif in describing Saul's "conversion," and especially why he has chosen this particular motif to elaborate Saul's radical change. This metaphor should be understood in the narratological context of one's radical transformation, which presses us to see other contemporary Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish texts that depict radical religious and philosophical transformations.

Analysis on the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish writings has shown that in these texts a person's radical cognitive shift to a new philosophical teaching and /or the Jewish religiosity was depicted primarily with the motif of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight. We also find other accompanying literary elements such as a guiding figure, importance of the correct education, stress on one's ignorance, etc., which are also shared by the Lukan descriptions of Saul's "conversion."

In conclusion, it seems that Luke elaborated Saul's experience – which in his letters was not identified as a "conversion" – to a definite "Christian conversion" that involves a radical cognitive shift. By presenting Paul himself as undergoing the dramatic transition from darkness to light, Luke also assimilates Paul's experience with that of other gentile converts and makes him a model of "Christian conversion" that both Jews and gentiles can follow. Saul, as a person who was zealous but whose passion was directed toward a wrong direction, "converted" as his previous ignorance and errors were debunked by the sudden encounter with the divine light, i.e., the true knowledge of Jesus and the God. This is what Paul and other Jewish philosophical texts described the experience of the gentiles who convert to the monotheistic religiosity.

Chapter 4. Repenting Saul

A distinctive element in all the Lukan descriptions of Paul's conversion is that Luke has Saul receiving baptism and remission of sins. These elements go hand-in-hand with the notion of repentance in Luke-Acts.[255] This theme of repentance, linked with the ritual of baptism and characterized by a more technical vocabulary, runs throughout the Lukan narrative.[256] Although there are some discrepancies between Acts 9, 22, and 26, the notion of repentance persists in all three Lukan descriptions of Paul's conversion, together with the motif of transition from darkness to light that we discussed in the previous chapter.

In Acts 9, as soon as his sight is restored, Saul gets up and is immediately baptized (9:18-19). In Acts 22, while there is no explicit description of Saul receiving the baptism, it is alluded by Ananias who urges Saul to be baptized and have his sins washed away (22:16). In Acts 26, Luke does not relate repentance directly to Saul's "conversion," but introduces repentance as the essential process in the general "Christian conversion" by describing Paul's mission as helping the gentiles to "repent" (26:19) and receive "forgiveness of sins" (26:18). Here the repentance and forgiveness of sins are what Saul himself experienced in his "conversion," as depicted Paul's baptism in the previous chapters of Acts 9 and 22.

The Lukan depiction of Saul as receiving the baptism is intriguing since from Paul's undisputed letters we only gain an ambiguous idea whether he was also baptized as other gentile converts. For instance, Paul several times notes that he had baptized other gentile converts (1 Cor. 1:13-16) and presents baptism as a ritual for the gentiles who

[255] See pp. 101-102.

[256] Lk. 3:3, 8; 5:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7; 16:30; 17:3-4; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20.

accept his message (Gal. 3:27). In Rom. 6:3-4 Paul seems to include himself among those who were baptized by using the first person plural verb ἐβαπτίσθημεν:

> 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also walk in newness of life.

In this passage Paul does not mean that he belongs to those who were baptized, i.e., the gentile converts. Paul uses the first person plural verbs for a persuasive rhetorical shift from Rom. 6:1, which is in conjunction with the diatribal elements in vv.1-11 and then exhortative style for the rest of his argument.[257] Paul's rhetoric is to effectively caution his gentile audience against sinful behaviors they do as they follow the bodily passions (Cf. Rom. 6:12-14). As Jewett has rightly noted, here Paul's main point is not on the baptism but death. Paul's mention of baptism recalls the audience of their conversion event associated with baptism, and stresses their changed class as those who have died to sin.[258]

At the same time, concerning the notion of repentance, which in Luke-Acts is related to the baptism of water, Paul's letters reflect his confidence about his past life as a Jew, even with his acknowledgment of his former role as a persecutor of the church. As I will discuss further in the following discussion, Paul's letters show no vestige of repentance (Gal. 1:11-24; Phil. 3:4-10; 2 Cor. 15:7-11). Paul indeed does not use the notion of repentance to describe his change from a persecutor to an apostle, while he uses

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[257] Jewett, *Romans*, 391, 396.

[258] Jewett, *Romans*, 395, esp. n48. For Paul's formulation of the link between baptism and the death of Christ, see Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul: A Study in Pauline Theology* (trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Oxford: Herder & Herder, 1964), 33-34; Hans Dieter Betz, "Transferring a Ritual: Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Romans 6," in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pederson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 84-118.

this notion for the gentile conversion to the Jesus movement (2 Cor. 12:20-21; Rom. 1:18-2:4).

In this chapter, by analyzing the Lukan descriptions of Saul's repentance in Acts and comparing them to Paul's own accounts on his change, I first show that Paul's baptism and repentance in Acts is the Lukan literary creation. Then by analyzing the use of repentance in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish literature, I show that the primary connotation of repentance is one's cognitive change, which is to realize his/her previous errant thinking and ignorance upon the revelation of a new philosophical teaching. Hellenistic Jewish writings, as using the philosophical tradition, also incorporated this concept into their discussion on the gentile conversion to characterize it as a philosophical turn, i.e., as a cognitive change from their ignorance to the acknowledgment of the monotheistic deity. From these analyses, I argue that Luke picked up this notion of repentance in Acts to identify Paul's "conversion" as a radical cognitive shift, i.e., a new understanding most similar to what we see in the philosophical discussions on those who newly join the school. Together with the motif of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight, the notion of repentance contributes to the Lukan literary purpose of identifying the "Christian conversion" as a philosophical turn.

4.1. Repenting Saul in Acts

In Acts 9:18-19, Luke describes Saul as receiving baptism after his sight is restored:

> 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes; his sight was restored, he was baptized (καὶ εὐθέως ἀπέπεσαν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ὡς λεπίδες, ἀνέβλεψέν τε καὶ ἀναστὰς ἐβαπτίσθη), 19 and after taking some food he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus…

Similarly in Acts 22:16, after Saul recovers his eyesight, Ananias urges him not to delay to be baptized and let his sins be washed away:[259]

> "And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, by calling on his name (καὶ νῦν τί μέλλεις; ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.)."

Here Luke relates the baptism to the remission of sins. In these two passages, we observe that Luke presents baptism and remission of sins as what naturally and immediately follow Saul's recognition of the true identity of Jesus, which is depicted as his transition from blindness to sight.

In fact, in both Acts 9 and 22 Luke does not depict Saul's experience using μετανοέω or μετάνοια, which are the common Greek terms denoting the notion of repentance.[260] Instead, we find a stress on and remission of sins, and these elements are directly linked to the notion of repentance in Luke-Acts. In Luke 3:3, as following Mk. 1:4, Luke describes John the Baptist as preaching the "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness/remission of sins (βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν; Lk 3:3; Cf. Acts 1:5; 13:24; 19:4)."[261] Then in Lk. 24:46-47, Luke presents the repentance as bringing the remission of sins, which became possible through the suffering and death of the messiah:

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[259] Pervo, *Acts*, 565.

[260] Lk. 3:3, 8; 5:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7; 16:30; 17:4; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20. Nave, *The Role and Function*, 208. I discuss the specific meaning of the repentance in the following sections.

[261] Cf. Mk. 1:4; Mt. 3:2, 8, 11. In Mark and Matthew, the preaching of John is understood as a calling for Jews to "repentance" in the Deuteronomistic fashion, with baptism as a ritual of preparation. Nave, *The Role and Function*, 132-33. Matthew stresses point by postponing the notion of forgiveness of sins – the effect of repentance – until Mt. 26:28 where he attributes the power to forgive sins to the death of Jesus. Cf. Mt. 3.7; 21:25; Nave, *The Role and Function*, 131. The Lukan treatment of the linkage between baptism, repentance, and remission of sins is much more elaborated, as discussed below.

> 46 and he [Jesus] said to them: "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness/remission of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations (καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη), beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things."

Here we see that now gentiles are also placed under the effect of repentance. In Acts 2:38, Peter uses the notion of repentance to answer the Jews who ask what they should do after listening to Peter's speech about the death of Jesus and his identity as the messiah. He says to them:

> "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness/remission of your sins (μετανοήσατε, [φησίν,] καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν); and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

From these passages, we see the link between baptism, repentance, and forgiveness of sins in Luke-Acts, and that Luke relates Saul's conversion closely with the notion of repentance in Acts 9 and 22.[262]

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[262] In Luke-Acts, "the baptism of water for the remission of sins" and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are linked but distinct. Luke uses different terms and ideas in describing the baptism of water and Spirit. Luke relates the baptism of water with the notion of repentance and presents it as an initiatory ritual for those who newly join the Jesus movement. He uses the term βαπτίζω "to baptize" to denote this concept. See Lk. 3:3, 7, 12; 7:29-30; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-13, 16, 38; 9:18; 10:37, 48; 11:16; 13:24; 16:15, 33; 18:8, 25; 19:3-5; 22:16. For the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Luke sometimes uses the verb βαπτίζω but distinguishes it from the baptism of water by specifying the objects. See Lk. 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16. Luke rather relates the baptism of Spirit with the image of outpouring from the heaven, and a believer receiving and being filled with it. He uses the correlated terms denoting this image, such as ἐκχέω "to pour out" (Acts 2:17, 18, 33; 10:45), ἐπιπίπτω "to fall upon" (Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15), καταβαίνω "to descend" (Lk. 3:22), ἐπέρχομαι "to come upon" (Acts 1:8), ἐρχομαι "to come" (Acts 19:6), δίδωμι "to give" (Lk. 11:13; Acts 8:18-19; 15:8), λαμβάνω "to receive" (Acts 1:8; 2:38; 8:15, 17; 10:47; 19:2), πίμπλημι "to fill" (Lk. 1:41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52), and πλήρης "to be full" (Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24). In Acts, the baptism of water often but not necessarily precedes the receiving of the Holy Spirit, as in Acts 10:47-48 and 11:15-18.

In Acts 26, although Luke does not relate repentance explicitly with Saul's experience as in Acts 9 and 22, he links this notion directly to the general concept of "Christian conversion." This literary move is what we have already observed in his use of the metaphor of transition from darkness to light.[263] In Acts 26:18, through Paul's mouth Luke states Paul's mission as:

> "to open their eyes so that they may turn (ἐπιστρέψαι) from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness/remission of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me [Jesus](τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κλῆρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.)."

Here, acquiring the right knowledge of God and the messiah, which is analogically described as turning from darkness to light, allows one to receive the remission of sins and salvation divinely prepared both for Jews and gentiles. While here in Acts 26:18 Luke only alludes to the necessity of repentance through the phrase "remission of sins," in the following speech of Paul, he makes it clear that repentance is an essential element of "conversion" to the Jesus movement. Luke has Paul say to Agrippa concerning his mission:

The receiving of the Holy Spirit is a divine proof or authorization that a person is acceptable for the God and ready for his work (Acts 1:2, 5, 8; 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3, 10; 8:29; 10:38, 47; 11:15-18; 15:8).

In Acts 9 and 22, Saul receives the baptism of water as the verb βαπτίζω once in passive (9:18) and middle (22:16) suggest. In addition, the coming of the Spirit depends on the laying on of hands, and here Ananias does not lay hands upon Saul. Daniel Marguaret, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles,'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002), 127 n41; Joel B. Green, "From 'John's Baptism' to 'Baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus': The Significance of Baptism in Luke-Acts," in B*aptism, the New Testament and the Church*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 172; François Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Thirty-three Years of Research (1950-1983*) (trans. Ken McKinney; Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1987), 235.

[263] See Section 3.1.

> "19 After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, and in Jerusalem and throughout the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds worthy of repentance (πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπήγγελλον μετανοεῖν καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα πράσσοντας)." (Acts 26:19-20)[264]

According to Pervo, Acts 26 is the most crafted oration in Acts, where Luke makes Paul's defense speech into a statement about his mission.[265] With a skilled concentric structure in the body of the speech, Luke highlights Paul's call in this speech and the divine mission.[266] In this summary statement about the apostolic mission and divine plan, Luke describes repentance as the essential and initial step following the revelation about the messiah. Jews and gentiles should repent to join the community of God.

In fact, Luke's description of Saul as repenting in his conversion is intriguing when we compare it with Paul's own accounts of his experience. In his undisputed letters, Paul in nowhere describes his change from a persecutor to an apostle of the Jesus movement by resorting to the notion of repentance.

In Gal. 1:11-24, Paul defends his gospel to his audience by claiming its divine origin.[267] To stress this point, Paul brings up his previous life as a persecutor of the church who tried to destroy it (v.13). Then he further describes that he was called to proclaim Jesus among the gentiles in God's predestined time (v.16):

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[264] Here the term ἐπιστρέφω is what Paul uses in his discussion of gentile conversion in 1 Thess. 1:9-10 and Rom. 2:4, to designate their turn from the idolatry and repentance (μετάνοια).

[265] Pervo, *Acts*, 625-26.

[266] Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 80; Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Missoula: Scholars, 1974), 211-12; Pervo, *Acts*, 626.

[267] Cf. Gal. 1:1.

> 13 You have heard of my earlier life in Judaism (ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ), that I was excessively persecuting (ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον) the church of God and was ravaging (ἐπόρθουν) it. 14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. 15 And/but when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased (Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν [ὁ θεὸς] ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ) 16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles (ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν)…

In this passage, Paul is confident in his former life in Judaism, as he says that he "advanced in Judaism" and was "far more zealous" for the Jewish tradition than others were.[268] Here Paul does not mean that his conduct against the church was a result of an extremist (i.e. zealots) or mindless fanaticism, but that it was in sincere conformity with the contemporary expectations of a faithful Jew living in the Hellenistic world.[269] It was because of this loyalty for the Jewish tradition and the God that he persecuted the church. It was also to this Jew who was blameless with regard to the Jewish tradition that God revealed the messiah and the divine mission for the gentiles.[270] In Galatians, we find no indication of regret or grief about his previous conviction and lifestyle as a Pharisaic Jew, which are the two elements that Paul often relates in his discussion of repentance in other passages.[271]

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[268] Luke continues to describe Saul as righteous concerning the Law in Acts 26:4-8. In this passage, Paul narrates his past as a loyal Jew and argues that he is being accused for his hope as a Jew. Also Acts 22:3-5; 23:6.

[269] Betz, *Galatians,* 67-68. "Judaism (Ἰουδαϊσμός)" in v.13 is a Hellenistic-Jewish term that describes the Jewish religion and lifestyle that is different from the other Hellenistic religious practices. Cf. 2 Macc. 2:21; 8:1; 14:38; 4 Macc. 4:26.

[270] We observe Paul's similar confidence in his life as a Jew also in 2 Cor. 11:22; Rom. 11:1; Cf. For the Lukan adaptation of Paul's confidence in Acts, see Acts 22:3-5; 23:6; 26:4-5. Stendahl, *Paul Among the Jews,* 80.

[271] For instance, 2 Cor. 7:8-11 and 12:20-21. See 4.2 for Paul's use of the notion of repentance in general. Stendahl points out that it is not "sin" and "forgiveness" that dominate Paul's understanding of his experience but "weakness." Stendahl conjectures

As discussed in Chapter 2, in Galatians Paul also describes his change by using the Hebrew prophetic language of divine calling, thus revealing his confidence as a prophet chosen by the God for a divine mission.[272] Paul understands his past as being ready to be called by the God for a special mission, being zealous for the tradition as to persecute the church which he considered to be detrimental to the Jewish tradition.[273] Considering these facts, it is difficult to conceive that Paul understood his past life as something that requires repentance. By mentioning his past life as a persecutor, Paul rather stresses the absolute intervention of the God upon his life and the divine origin of his gospel.[274]

Another passage that we find Paul's confidence about his past is Phil. 3:4-10:

> 4 even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else think to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless (κατὰ ζῆλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ

"weakness" as being related to Paul's actual physical illness. See Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 40-52.

[272] Betz, *Galatians*, 69; Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 8. As in Isa. 42:6; 49:1-6 and Jer. 1:5, Paul describes God as choosing him even before he was born, and this calling is for a specific divine task concerning both the Israelites and gentiles. Cf. Judg. 13:5; Ps. 22:10; 58:3; 71:6; 1 QH 9.29. The remarkably similar terminologies in describing his revelatory experience with the Hebrew prophecies attest that Paul understood his experience in the context of Jewish prophetic calling. Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 27. See 2.2 for more discussion.

[273] The Greek term εὐδόκησεν in v. 15 denotes to the divine decision in Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian texts. See Ps. (LXX) 19:14; 67:17; Lk. 12:32; 1 Cor. 1:21; Col. 1:19. On the term καλέσας in v. 15 as a prophetic terminology, see Isa. 41:9; 42:6, 11; 43:1; 45:3; 48:12, 15; 49:1; 50:2; 51:2. Paul also refers this notion in Rom. 1:1 and 1 Cor. 1:1.

[274] In Gal. 1:23-24, Paul says that others praised the God after hearing that the God has changed Paul from a persecutor to an apostle: "23 … they only heard it said, "The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they glorified God because of me."

> δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος). 7 Yet whatever gains were to me, these I have come to regard as loss (ζημίαν) because of Christ. 8 yes, indeed I regard everything as loss because of the prominency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord (ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου), because of whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in/of Christ, the righteousness from God by the faith, 10 to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death…

Here Paul says that he persecuted the church (v.6a), but explains that it as the result of his zeal for the Jewish tradition.[275] This zeal is not something that should be blamed for, since in the following parallel phrase Paul says that he was "blameless" with respect to "righteousness under the law." (v.6b) In vv.7-8 Paul notes that he no longer considers his previous qualities as something that he can boast about by referring to them as a "loss." The term "loss," however, does not mean that Paul considers his past as something in need of repentance. In the continuing verses Paul makes it clear that he was and is "righteous" for two different reasons (vv.9-10): before he was righteous with the standard of the Law, but now he is righteous because of his faith in Jesus or the faith of Jesus. While Paul's understanding of his past life underwent certain change, he does not repent his past.

In another prominent passage on his change, 1 Cor. 15:7-11, Paul says that he is "insufficient (οὐκ ἱκανὸς)" to be called an apostle because he persecuted the church before his encounter with the risen Christ (v.8). Can we read this passage as a reflection of his repentance?

[275] For further analysis on Paul's confidence of his righteousness, refer to John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University, 2008), 484-85, for the term "loss," see p. 491; Bornkamm, *Paul*, 14.

> 7 Then he appeared (ὤφθη) to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born/aborted fetus, he appeared also to me (ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερεὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὤφθη κἀμοι). 9 For I am the least of the apostles, insufficient to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God (Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ) 10 But/and by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain but more abundantly I labored than any of them-- though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe. (1 Cor. 15:7-11)[276]

Here Paul admits himself as the last apostle who met the risen Jesus later than the other disciples. He says that Jesus appeared to him who was like an "untimely born/aborted fetus (ἐκτρώματι; v.8)," and also notes that he is "insufficient (οὐκ ἱκανὸς)" to be called an apostle because he persecuted the church (v.9). While these adjectives are self-depreciating, they should not be interpreted as reflecting his repentance concerning his past.

The Greek term ἔκτρωμα in v.7 often denotes premature birth, abortion, or miscarriage in the Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature, and its fundamental idea was death.[277] In the Hellenistic Jewish tradition, this term was used mostly in a figurative manner to denote the most miserable and worthless position.[278] While Paul thus describes the wretchedness of his prior life with this term, we should not conclude that Paul is expressing his regret and repentance. As Harm W. Hollander and Gijsbert E. Van der Hout rightly point out, Paul uses this term to assert his legitimacy as an apostle in the

[276] For studies on this passage, see Harm W. Hollander and Gijsbert E. Van der Hout, "The Apostle Paul Calling Himself an Abortion: 1 Cor. 15:8 within the Context of 1 Cor. 15:8-10," *NovT* 38 (1996): 224-25.

[277] Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Fortress, 1975), 259; Hollander and Van der Hout, "Calling Himself an Abortion," 224-25; 227-32.

[278] Hollander and Van der Hout, "Calling Himself an Abortion," 231-32.

larger context of the prophetic tradition.[279] In the Jewish prophetic tradition in which a person receives a divine appointment and protests against his/her commission, the person typically reacts by pointing to his/her insufficiency and unworthiness. This rhetoric in turn emphasizes the power of the God and the divine grace.[280]

The term "insufficient" as well is often used in the responses of a person who wants to dismiss a divine appointment. Use of this term thus reversely stresses the presence of the divine authority and assistance with the person called. For instance, in the LXX version of Exo. 4:10, Moses responds to the God by saying: "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent (οὐχ ἱκανός εἰμι), neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." Here the term translated in English as "eloquent" essentially means "insufficient," the same term as what Paul used to describe himself.[281] To sum, in 1 Cor. 15:7-11 Paul depicts his former life with self-derogatory terms to stress the divine power and grace that endowed him the apostleship and the gospel about the resurrection of the Christ.[282] At the same time, he asserts that the divine grace was not in vain as he labors to the surpassing degree compared to the other apostles (v.10). 1 Cor. 15:7-11 thus should not be interpreted as Paul exhibiting his regret about his former life or the repentance involved in his change as Luke describes in Acts.

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[279] For the previous scholarship on this passage, see Hollander and Van der Hout, "Calling Himself an Abortion," 224-25; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 259 n95.

[280] Hafemann says, "The negative emphasis in the obstacle motif on the insufficiency of the prophet implies and underscores a positive emphasis on the sufficiency of the prophet as a result of God's grace." Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995). 60.

[281] See also Judg. 6:15; Isa. 6:5; Jer. 1:6; 1 Sam. 9:21; Cf. 2 Bar. 54:9; *Assumptio Mosis* 12.6-7; Eph. 3:8; 1 Tim. 1:15-16; Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans* 9.2.

[282] For a similar opinion, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, "An ἔκτρωμα, Though Appointed from the Womb: Paul's Apostolic Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15 and Galatians," *HTR* 79 (1986), 198-205.

If it is not Paul but Luke who makes Paul as repenting in his encounter with the risen Christ, what is the meaning and purpose of this depiction of Paul in Acts? To answer this question, we first need to analyze the use and meaning of repentance in Luke-Acts.

4.2. Repentance in the "Conversion" Cases in Acts

In his extensive study on the notion of repentance in Greco-Roman, Jewish, and early Christian literature, Guy Nave noted that repentance (μετανοέω; μετάνοια) essentially means "a change in thinking that usually leads to a change in behavior and way of life."[283] As I will discuss more in depth in the following Section 4.3, fundamental to this notion of repentance is the cognitive shift that begins as one recognizes his/her previous errant thinking and change it in accordance with the new teaching. While the notion of repentance does not limit itself to cognitive change but involves emotional, behavioral, and communal elements, cognitive shift is its primary emphasis.

While early Christian writings share and build on such an understanding of repentance, this notion has a unique role and function in Luke-Acts.[284] In particular, when compared to the undisputed Pauline letters and the gospels of Matthew and Mark, the Lukan notion of repentance demonstrates development and refinement of this concept, especially in stressing the cognitive aspect of this notion similarly to the Greek philosophical and some Hellenistic Jewish texts. In these texts, repentance is the

[283] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 145. In Acts, these Greek terms μετανοέω or μετάνοια are almost exclusively used in the context of conversion, while only in three cases these terms are used in different contexts. In Acts 8:22, μετανοέω is used in Peter's rebuke on Simon who tried to buy the apostolic power of helping believers to receive the spirit. In Acts 13:24 and 19:4, μετάνοια is used in the typical reference to the John's baptism of repentance. Other than these uses, the notion of repentance in Acts appears primarily in the conversion episodes, as the natural and necessary process for those who received the true knowledge of the God and Jesus Christ.

[284] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 145.

enlightening moment that enables a person to recognize one's former misunderstanding or ignorance, which brings a dramatic turn in thinking to new ideas, temporary emotional shock, and the subsequent changes in behaviors. Luke also makes repentance the primary and essential element in "Christian conversion" in Acts.[285]

In the New Testament and other early Christian literature from the first two centuries CE, repentance does not have a dominant literary role and presence as in Luke-Acts.[286] Out of fifty-six occurrences of μετανοέω and μετάνοια in the New Testament, twenty-five (44.6%) are from Luke-Acts alone. There are only seven occurrences in Matthew, three in Mark, four in undisputed Pauline letters, five in other writings, and twelve in Revelation.[287]

Not only the number of occurrences but also specific use of repentance indicates that Luke is more detailed and careful in his utilization of this notion. In the Gospel of Mark, repentance is found almost entirely in reference to the preaching of John the Baptist, in the eschatological context where the "kingdom of God" has arrived. For instance, in Mk. 1:15, John the Baptist proclaims: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent (μετανοεῖτε), and believe in the good news."[288] The Gospel of Matthew also follows Mark as introducing repentance in relation to John the Baptist.[289] Following Q tradition at the same time, Matthew further applies this notion to the gentiles

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[285] On his analysis on the notion of repentance in Luke-Acts, Nave argues that Luke presents this concept as essential in the preaching of the John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles, and in the conversions of people from diverse backgrounds. Nave says that Luke especially relates repentance with "ethical social behavior that enables once alienated people to live together as a community of God's people." See Nave, *The Role and Function*, 221-24.

[286] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 3, 135.

[287] W. F. Moulton, A. S. Geden and H. K. Moulton, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (5th ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978). For the uses of repentance in other New Testament writings, see Nave, *The Role and Function*, 119-44.

[288] Also see Mk. 1:4; 6:12.

[289] Mt. 3:2, 8, 11; 4:17.

joining the community of the God. In Mt. 11:20-21, Jesus criticizes those who do not repent, as contrasting them with the gentile cities which repent.[290] In the following Mt. 12:41, repentance is more clearly related to the preaching of Jonah and the gentile repentance:

> "The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented (μετενόησαν) at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!"

Neither Mark nor Matthew elaborates on the meaning of repentance, nor does repentance play an integral part in the whole narratological scheme and purpose of each gospel.[291]

Luke on the other hand develops this notion in relation to the gentile conversion and applies it both to Jews and gentiles in the era of apostolic mission. Luke introduces the notion of repentance already in his gospel to identify the Jesus movement and the apostolic mission. For instance, as introducing John the Baptist, Luke extends the prophetic reference from Second Isaiah shared by Mark and Matthew.[292] In Lk. 3:5-6, he quotes the Isa. 40:3-5 and describes John's baptism of repentance as analogous to making the Lord's path straight by filling in the valleys, straightening the crooked ways, and making the rough paths smooth. As Nave points out, here Luke uses Second Isaiah both

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[290] 20 Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent (ὅτι οὐ μετενόησαν). 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented (μετενόησαν) long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

[291] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 120-21.

[292] Cf. Mk. 1:4; Mt. 3:1-2. Differently from Luke, Matthew does not link repentance and the forgiveness of sins directly, but postpones the notion of forgiveness of sins until 26:28 where he attributes the power to forgive sins to the death of Jesus (Mt 3.7; 21:25). Yet following the Synoptic tradition, baptism of John is still related to one's admit of sins as in Mt 3:6. Nave, *The Role and Function*, 131.

to imply the universal salvation for Jews and gentiles, and also to stress the radical and fundamental transforming power of repentance.[293]

Luke also presents repentance as the central message of the apostolic mission at the end of his gospel where he describes the appearance of resurrected Jesus to the disciples and his last commandment (Lk. 24:36-49). This passage functions as a bridge between Luke's two-volume narratives of the Gospel and Acts, as Jesus' missionary work now being handed down to the disciples.[294] In vv. 44-48 Luke describes Jesus as saying:

> 44 and he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and psalms must be fulfilled. 45 Then he opened their minds to understand (διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι) the scriptures, 46 and he said to them: "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations (καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη), beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things."

This passage both anticipates the opening of Acts (1:4-8) and parallels nicely with Paul's speech about his mission in Acts 26:18, where he describes it as:

> "to open their eyes so that they may turn (ἐπιστρέψαι) from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness/remission of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me [Jesus](τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κλῆρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.)."

As Jesus opened the disciples' mind to understand the Scripture and the role of Christ, now it is their turn to open the eyes of the others and lead them to repentance. It is in

[293] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 147; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity*, 48; Méndez-Moratalla, *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke*, 78-79.

[294] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 195-98.

consideration of this wider Lukan literary effort around the notion of repentance that we analyze the role and function of Paul's repentance in Acts.

In Paul's undisputed letters, while we find the earliest Christian use of the notion of repentance among extant early Christian writings, repentance plays a minimal role as in other NT writings.[295] Only three times in his undisputed letters Paul incorporates the notion of repentance for his discussion, in 2 Cor. 7:8-11, 12:20-21, and Rom. 2:4-5.[296]

In 2 Cor. 7:8-11, Paul applies the notion of repentance to the Corinthians who failed to live up to the ethical and communal standards of the God:[297]

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[295] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 42-43. Stendahl also points out that in Paul's letters the terms "forgiveness (ἄφεσις)" and the verb "to forgive (ἀφιέναι)" are strikingly absent. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 23-24. Paul's rare use of the notion of repentance for describing the gentile conversion is somewhat intriguing when we consider the growing centrality of this notion in the Second Temple Judaism especially to discuss the gentile conversion. It is also interesting because the early Church believed Jesus taught repentance, as we see in the synoptic introductions of the baptism of repentance. Concerning this absence, some scholars argue that Paul deliberately chose not to use the notion of repentance in his discussion because Jesus taught repentance different from the traditional usage in the Hellenistic Judaism. Sanders, for instance, argues that the notion of repentance as expressed in the NT is a later development in the end of the first century CE. E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), 174-211; Morlan, *Conversion*, 141, esp. n3; Mary E. Andrews, "Paul and Repentance," *JBL* (1935): 125. Nave also points out that the use of μετανοέω and μετάνοια to express the idea of repentance drastically increased in the Christian writings after the composition of Luke-Acts in the late first to early second century CE. This increase reflects the developing Christian theology of repentance and penitential discipline in the Church. Nave, *The Role and Function*, 120. Cf. Later Judaism freely incorporated repentance to their vocabulary. Yitzchak Blau, "Creative Repentance: On Rabbi Soloveitchik's Concept of Teshuva," *Tradition* (1994): 11-18.

[296] Paul's use of this notion found in these passages introduced is consistent with other early Christian usage of μετανοέω and μετάνοια which generally denotes "a change in thinking – precipitated by a genuine sense of sorrow and remorse – that is manifested by a fundamental change in lifestyle." Nave, *The Role and Function*, 124.

[297] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 123.

> 8 For even if I made you sorry in the letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it, for I see that I grieved you with that letter, though only briefly; Ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, οὐ μεταμέλομαι· εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην, βλέπω [γὰρ] ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς). 9 Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance (ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν); for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not suffer loss in any way by us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret (ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται), but worldly grief produces death. 11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter.

Here, with his rhetorical word play around the notion of repentance by the terms such as "grief" and "regret," Paul asserts for the necessity of repentance to the Corinthian believers.[298] In fact, what they have to repent is their previous behaviors that somehow pained Paul, as noted in 2 Cor. 7:1-3. Here the notion of repentance is applied to the believers who did not behave as expected in their relationship with Paul.[299]

In the following passage of 2 Cor. 12:20-21, Paul urges Corinthians to repent from their immoral behaviors which are often attributed to the gentiles who practice idolatry or who are bound in the passions and vice:

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[298] In this passage, similarly to repentance in the Greek philosophical literature, we see that grief lies at the heart of repentance as the terms "grief (λύπη)" and "to grieve (λυπέω)" occur eight times in these verses. Nave, *The Role and Function*, 48. Paul's word play of "to regret" and "to repent" reveals us the related but distinctive meanings of these two terms. The former essentially denotes changing one's mind or behavior as accompanying temporary negative feelings, whereas the latter denotes a change more fundamental than a mere "regret," which is to eagerly put away sin and wrongdoings that are contrary to God's will. Nave, *Repentance*, 121-22. Concerning the relationship between repentance and grief in the Stoic philosophy, refer to Section 4.3. See White, "Galen's *Peri Alupias* in Context," 236-37 for the discussion on Paul's use of Stoic terminologies in this passage.

[299] Victor Paul Furnish, *2 Corinthians* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 369.

> 20 For I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder (μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεῖαι, καταλαλιαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι). 21 I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced (μὴ πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου ταπεινώσῃ με ὁ θεός μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πενθήσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ᾗ ἔπραξαν).

In Rom. 2:4-5, Paul more clearly links the notion of repentance with gentile conversion, that God's kindness is opened for the gentile repentance.[300] This passage is part of Paul's proclamation of the validity of his gospel and universal indictment against humanity continuing from Rom. 1:16-32.[301] In 1:18-32 he lists various kinds of sinful practices that resulted from foolish idolatry, which overlaps with the list in 2 Cor. 12:20-21. Paul says:

> 24 Therefore God gave them up in the desires of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies (ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαιτὰ σώματα) among themselves, 25 whoever exchanged the truth about God for a lie (ἐν τῷ ψεύδει) and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen… 29 They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are

[300] Some scholars argue that repentance in Romans functions not as a central element of conversion but as a literary foil. Frank Stagg, "The Plight of Jew and Gentile in Sin Romans 1: 18–3: 20," *Review & Expositor* 73 (1976): 401-13; David Morlan, "Luke and Paul on Repentance," in *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts and Convergences*, edited by Michael F. Bird and Joel Willitts (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 134; Idem., *Conversion*, 142. For other scholars with similar opinions, see D. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 134; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 28, 123-9. While it is true that Paul does not use repentance centrally to discuss the gentile conversion, in 2 Cor. 12:20-21 and Rom. 2:4-5, Paul still sees repentance as the essential way through which gentiles turn from the idolatry and ungodly behaviors to the Jewish God and appropriate lifestyle.

[301] Jewett, *Romans*, 196; Nave, *The Role and Function*, 123.

> gossips (πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόνου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστὰς), 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents (καταλάλους θεοστυγεῖς ὑβριστὰς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς), 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless (ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας).

Continuing his discussion on the judgment of God upon Jews and gentiles, Paul brings up the notion of repentance in Rom. 2:4-5. In this "diatribe," as discussed by Stowers,[302] Paul is not arguing against his actual opponents but expressing his general idea by addressing the imagined interlocutor:

> 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? (ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει;) 5 But by your hard and impenitent heart (ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν) you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and the revelation of God's righteous judgment.

From 2 Cor. 12:20-21 and Rom. 2:4-5, it seems that Paul lays the possibility of gentiles to return to the God through "repentance." For the gentiles who have already turned from idolatry, Paul requires repentance to live up to the divine standard required for those who belong to the new community of the God. For those who have not yet turned to the God, Paul presents repentance as a way to turn from the false idolatry to the true form of piety.[304]

Differently from Paul's letters and other early Christian writings in the New Testament, the notion of repentance is central in Luke-Acts, especially to describe the people newly joining the Jesus movement in Acts.[305] We also observe Luke's consistent

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[302] Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 86-93. Cf. It is possible that Paul is implicitly critiquing the judgmental spirit within the Roman churches (14:3-5, 10, 13, 22). See Jewett, *Romans,* 196-7.

[304] Cf. 1 Thess. 1:9-10

[305] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 145-224.

effort to specify and elaborate what repentance means, thus to use this notion for building the concept of "conversion to Christianity" throughout Luke-Acts.

In Acts, Luke uses the notion of repentance not only for depicting Saul's "conversion," but also for many other conversion episodes before and after Saul's story in Acts 9.[309] Whereas Paul presented the possibility of repentance for the gentiles' coming back to the Lord, but did not apply this notion for the Jews or himself, while the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew presented repentance as a way primarily for the Jews to come back to the Lord following the Deuteronomistic model.[310] In sharp contrast, however, Luke in Acts presents repentance as applicable both for Jews and gentiles, as the central and initial element in the conversions of both parties. In particular, we observe Luke's consistent stress on the radical cognitive shift in repentance both for Jews and gentiles by pinpointing ignorance as the cause of their sins and what necessitates repentance. A general analysis of Luke's use of repentance throughout Acts will help us to better understand why Luke incorporates this notion to describe Saul's change.

For the Jews in Acts, repentance is required for their ignorance of the true identity of Jesus and lack of proper understanding of the Scripture.[311] It is out of ignorance that they sinned by killing Jesus and should repent. For instance, in describing the very first

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[309] See Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20. Luke's description of Paul's conversion in Acts 9 parallels with Cornelius' conversion in Acts 10. Luke repeats both cases three times in Acts, Paul in Acts 9, 22, 26 and Cornelius in Acts 10:1-48, 11:1-18, 15:7-11. Pervo, *Acts*, 629 n32. Other parallels also exist between the descriptions in Acts 9 and 10, such as the God revealing his plan to the future converts and their human guides – Ananias and Peter – in visions, both Saul and Cornelius are freed from their previous ignorance – Saul from his ignorance about the true identity of Jesus and Cornelius from ignorance about the divine plan for gentiles and remaining practices of idolatry, and the encounter between the future converts and guides through divine intervention.

[310] See note 261.

[311] Cf. Nave, *The Role and Function*, 200-06.

Jewish converts in Acts 2:5-42, Luke presents repentance as the first step to be taken by the Jewish audience who heard Peter's revelatory speech on Jesus as the messiah and their faults of killing the prophesized messiah.[312] Luke stresses the radical cognitive turn of the Jewish audience with literary details and repeated use of the Greek terms implying knowledge.

In this scene, the Jews first see a miraculous scene of disciples' speaking in tongues. They try to understand the situation, but cannot come up with any reasonable answers (vv. 7-13; 15). Then Peter enters the scene and explains what has been so far incomprehensible to the Jews, by revealing how Jesus' death and resurrection, and the present phenomenon of disciples' speaking in tongues fit perfectly with the prophecies in the Jewish scripture (vv. 14-36). With the repeated questions of the perplexed Jews (vv. 7, 8, 12, cf. v. 37), Luke highlights their ignorance and prepares the next scene of Peter's revelatory speech.[313] Luke here also contrasts the foreknowledge of God and prophets against the ignorance of the audience.[314] In v. 23 and 31, Peter says that God handed over Jesus to death according to his "foreknowledge (πρόγνωσις)," and David "foresaw (προιδών)" this divine plan (cf. v. 28). On the contrary, although the Jews knew (οἴδατε, v. 22) Jesus' miraculous deeds and they are now observing the disciples' speaking in tongues, they do not understand what these all mean.[315] In the following verses of vv. 17-

[312] Morlan rightly pointed out the importance of this episode as providing the initial momentum for the whole narrative of Acts, as well as its focus on the epistemological element. Morlan, *Conversion*, 111-12, 119-33.

[313] The common format of question-answer conversion episodes in Acts is in line with the Hellenistic genre known as *erotapokriseis*, which was widely used in the philosophical treatise and moral exhortations. This format also heightens Luke's concern of cognitive shift in conversion process. Fitzgerald and White, *The Tabula*, 12-14.

[314] For a similar contrast, see Acts 3:17-18. Here Peter "knows (οἶδα)" that the Jews acted previously in "ignorance (ἀγνοία)," and explains that God already "foretold (προκαττήγγελειν)" the prophets so that they have proper knowledge of Messiah.

[315] Cf. Acts 9:8.

36, Peter finally resolves their ignorance by revealing the right knowledge of Jesus and the phenomenon the Jews are observing.

Through these narratological techniques, the Lukan author depicts the Jews of Jerusalem as having a full "conversion" experience. He thus vividly contrasts the differing states of perception between their pre- and post-conversion. Peter's last word also highlights the importance of the cognitive change of the Jews and repentance in relation to this change. He says that God's plan is to let the Jews understand correctly about Jesus' identity:

> "Therefore the entire house of Israel to know with certainty (ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γινωσκέτω πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ) that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified (v.36)."[316]

Following Peter's revelation about Jesus, Luke describes the natural and expected reactions of those who now received the right knowledge, which is to repent and get rid of their sins (v.38):

> "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (μετανοήσατε, [φησίν,] καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος)."

In the following conversion scene of the Jews at the Solomon's Portico (Acts 3:1-4:4), Luke also highlights the necessity of repentance and points ignorance as the cause of their sinful behaviors. To the Jewish audience who are "utterly astonished (v.11)" by Peter's healing miracle, Peter first criticizes their wrong judgment about the phenomenon: "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this or why do you stare us as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? (v. 12)" After pointing out

[316] Cf. Lk. 1:3-4.

their lack of understanding of the scripture, in his continuing speech Peter blames their ignorance as resulting in the killing of Jesus and urges them to repent:

> "17 And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance (ἄγνοιαν), as did also your rulers… 19 Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out (μετανοήσατε οὖν καὶ ἐπιστρέψατε εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας)…"

Similarly to the earlier passage of Acts 2:5-42, here Luke points out ignorance as what made the Jews to commit the sin of killing Jesus and presents repentance as the first step that should be taken by the audience who gained the true understanding of Jesus.

For the gentiles in Acts, repentance is also required as the primary step to join the Jesus movement because of their ignorance about the true God and the practice of idolatry as the result of this ignorance.[317] After the scene of Saul's conversion, Luke depicts the first gentile conversion in Acts 10. Here to the gentile god-fearer Cornelius and his family Peter reveals Jesus Christ and the gospel message that "everyone who believes in him [Jesus] receives forgiveness/remission of sins through his name (ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν λαβεῖν διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ; 10:43)." Although here Luke does not explicitly mention the notion of repentance, he presents it as a necessary element in conversion by making Peter to speak about the remission of sins and describing the gentile audience as receiving the baptism of water in the following narrative (10:47-48).

At the same time, here Luke again stresses the errant behavior of Cornelius who, despite the fact that he was a god-fearer who had a rudimentary understanding of the Jewish monotheistic God, still was not free from idolatry as he worships the mortal. Luke

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[317] I disagree with Nave that repentance for Cornelius and the other gentiles is "presented here simply as believing in Jesus." Nave, *The Role and Function*, 213. Cornelius' wrong practice of worshipping a human being indicates that he still holds some wrong ideas about the divinity. As the first case of gentile "conversion," Luke shows that the gentiles have to turn away from ignorance about the true form of piety and idolatry to join the Jesus movement.

describes the encounter of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10:25-26: "25 On Peter's arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped (προσεκύνησεν) him. 26 But Peter made him get up, saying, "Stand up; I am only a mortal." Here the verb προσκυνές often denotes a human being falling down and worshipping the gods or superior beings. Cornelius is freed from this errant behavior only after Peter reveals him about the messiah who brings salvation to the gentiles through repentance in his name.

In Acts 17:29-31, in Paul's speech to the Athenians, Luke rather succinctly demonstrates that repentance is required for the gentiles and stresses the cognitive aspect of it:

> "29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now commanding that all men everywhere should repent (τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ θεός, τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν), 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness in a Man whom He has appointed, having given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead."

Here Paul points out the gentile ignorance as the cause of their idolatry, and after revealing them about the monotheistic God and the risen Christ, says that now it is time for the gentiles to "repent (v.30)." Whereas in Cornelius' case the cognitive aspect of repentance was implicit in the narrative, here Luke explicitly describes the gentile conversion as a radical cognitive shift from ignorance to right knowledge of the true god and his plan through the messiah.[318]

[318] Regarding Luke's use of Stoic philosophical tradition for Paul's speech in Acts 17:16-32, see David L. Balch, "The Areopagus Speech: An Appeal to the Stoic Historian Posidonius against Later Stoics and the Epicureans," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (eds., David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, Wayne A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 52-79.

From these examples, it may be argued that Luke uses the notion of repentance to describe the conversions of both Jews and gentiles in Acts. Repentance is the common step required for the both parties who gain right knowledge of the God and the messiah. Particularly, in presenting repentance in the conversion episodes of Acts, Luke stressed the cognitive aspect in one's change, which is from ignorance to knowledge of the messiah and the true God. This stress on the radical cognitive shift is what we have already observed in Luke's use of the motif of transition from darkness to light and from blindness to sight.

It is within this array of conversions narrated in Acts, especially at the crucial point where the narrative shifts from the conversions of Jews to gentiles, that Luke depicts Saul as going through repentance. As we have seen, the Lukan description is different from Paul's own account of his change which does not exhibit his repentance. Luke's crafted use of repentance as the essential element in one's entering to the Jesus movement and stress on the cognitive aspect are distinctive when compared to the usages of this notion in the other gospels, undisputed Pauline letters, and other early Christian writings. This Lukan literary effort suggests that we need to look at the larger literary milieu to understand the meaning and function of repentance in Acts, especially in the "conversion" of Saul. In fact, as I will discuss in the following Section 4.3, in some Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish texts the notion of repentance plays an integral role in one's radical transition from a religious or philosophical sect to another. As reading Saul's conversion stories in Acts together with this literary comparanda, I answer these questions: what is the meaning of repentance and what are the "sins" that one – including Saul – should get rid of? What kind of conversion does Luke construct in Acts as he recasts Saul's change with the notion of repentance?

4.3. Repentance as a Radical Cognitive Shift

As Stendahl and Fredriksen point out, in Western Christianity the Lukan version of Paul's story has become a model for Christian conversion.[319] Paul's conversion in Acts was reinterpreted by St. Augustine, so that Paul became the prototype of Christian convert who agonized over his sins and was redeemed from them through divine grace at a single dramatic moment of conversion. In this understanding of Paul's conversion, repentance is often considered as Paul's intense introspective struggle accompanied by severe remorse over his sins.[320]

The problem is, as we have already seen, that this notion of Paul's "conversion" is a creation of the Lukan author, and also is the description of Paul as going through repentance in his "conversion." Paul does not address his change with the notion of repentance, and his letters reflect his robust and confident conscience about his former life as a Jew even after he joined the Jesus movement.

The second problem is that Paul's repentance is understood primarily as an introspective struggle and thus the emotional aspect of repentance – regret, remorse, helplessness, and sudden relief as divine grace forgives him – is overly stressed in understanding the meaning of repentance. This misunderstanding is in part a result of the developing theology on penance in Western Christianity that was transmitted through

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[319] Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 12-19, 78-9; Fredriksen, "Paul and Augustine," 3-4; Fredriksen says that Luke influenced the modern understanding of Paul's change as a conversion, and "Augustine further compounded Luke's influence when he modeled his own conversion on a characteristically unique, but initially Lucan, reading of Paul." See page 5; Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 3; Scot McKnight, "Was Paul a Convert?" *Ex Auditu* 25 (2009): 110-12. Cf. See also Lohfink, *The Conversion of St. Paul*, 33-46; H. G. Wood, "The Conversion of Paul: Its Nature, Antecedents, and Consequences," *NTS* 1 (1955): 276-82; J. Dupont, "The Conversion of Paul and Its Influence on His Understanding of Salvation by Faith," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Paternoster, 1970), 176-94; For an extensive biblography, see Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 308 n1; Betz, *Galatians,* 64 n82.

[320] This interpretation is based also on Paul's discussion on sin in Rom. 7:14-25 and Gal. 2:15-21. McKnight, "Was Paul a Convert?" 112-13.

Christian thinkers such as Augustine, Gregory the Great, and further on, Martin Luther.[321] By reading the Lukan account of Paul's conversion through the lens of his personal experience and reinterpreting it through the concept of original sin, however, I think it is Augustine who interpreted Paul's change primarily as an emotional one, similarly to the definition of "conversion" proposed by James.[322] Augustine thus misrepresented Luke's purpose in utilizing the notion of repentance to describe Paul, which is to stress the radical cognitive transformation central to the Lukan concept of "Christian conversion" and to make Paul a model of "Christian" converts.[323] For Luke, what Paul went through was a radical cognitive shift, i.e., gaining a new sense of understanding and recognizing a "truth" which was not comprehended previously. This is a shift that we observe in the Greek philosophical and some Hellenistic Jewish writings that depict one's turn to a new philosophical system or the Jewish monotheism. In these texts, while repentance accompanies emotions of regret and remorse, it primarily imports one's cognitive shift from ignorance to the right knowledge. The presentation of Paul in Luke-Acts ultimately depends on the Hellenistic ideal of "conversion" to philosophy.

In the earliest Greek literary evidence available from the fifth century BCE, μετανοέω or μετάνοια mean "to have second thoughts" or "think afterwards."[324] These terms also implied change in thinking, as μετανοέω denoting "to think differently, change

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[321] Fredriksen, "Paul and Augustine," 3-6, 20-26; Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews*, 11-19. Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VIII; L. Michael White, "Transactionalism in the Penitential Thought of Gregory the Great," *Restoration Quarterly* 21 (1978): 34-35. Gregory utilized the metaphor of darkness-light to designate the original sin and being forgiven. See White, "Transactionalism," 37-8. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Mor.* IV, 27-PL LXXV, 651; For a study on Augustine's understanding of original sin, refer to Paul Rigby, *Original Sin in Augustine's Confessions* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1987);

[322] James, *The Varieties*, 157. See Section 1.1 for the discussion on James.

[323] On Augustine's view on the original sin, see White, "Transactionalism," 47; Paul Rigby, *Original Sin in Augustine's Confessions* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1987).

[324] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 40.

one's mind or view, from a different opinion, plan or purpose," and as μετάνοια "a change in mind, heart, view, opinion or purpose."[325] These became the most common meanings of repentance throughout the Hellenistic period. As expressing "change in thinking," repentance was also thought as guiding a person to realize his/her previous mistakes and to turn away from them. For instance, in Plato's description of the conversation between Socrates and Cleinias, they list what are considered as "good" in life. While reviewing their list, Socrates points out that they forgot to mention the greatest of the goods, the "good fortune." He says: "…after reconsidering (μετανοήσας) the matter once again, he realizes they have made another mistake," which is forgetting to mention the "good fortune."[326]

In the Stoic philosophy throughout the Classical and Hellenistic period, in particular, repentance was crucial in people's moral progress by making them to recognize their mistakes and ignorance, to get rid of their sins and passions that were the results of lack of wisdom, and to recover the harmony with reason.[327] For instance, the

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[325] Nave, *The Role and Function*, 41-42; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.1.3; Menander, *Epitrepontes* 289; This meaning of the terms continued throughout the Hellenistic period, as in Polybius, *Histories* 4.66.7 in the second century BCE, Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 11.37.3; 14.61.2 from the first century BCE; Demosthenes, *Oration* 26 (Against Aristogeiton, II) 17.4.

[326] Plato, *Euthydemus* 279 C. Translation followed W. R. M. Lamb, *Plato: Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1924).

[327] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 7.31.4; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 14.57.19-20. Repentance implied change in thinking that corrects one's previous mistakes. In the Stoic circle, repentance therefore had some negative connotation since they thought that it is only the fool, who lacks wisdom and makes wrong judgments, that needs repentance. A truly wise man, according to Stoic philosophy, does not need to change his mind at all. However, it was better for a fool or any man who falsely made misjudgment to change his mind than not changing his mind at all, because through repentance one can recover the harmony with reason. Nave, *The Role of Repentance,* 41-43. For examples, see Epicharmus, *Fragment* 280; Democritus, *Fragment* 66; Gorgias, *Fragment* 11; Chrisippus, *Fragmenta Moralia* 548.23 in Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.3.18.W; 113.5W; *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 1.59, 60; 2.65, 97; 3.377-420; Diogenes Laertius

first century CE Roman Stoic Seneca praises repentance by saying: "The most dependable change toward integrity comes from repentance (*ex paenitentia*)."[328] Plutarch from the first century CE also uses the notion of repentance as what makes one to realize his/her errors/sins and gain wisdom; he says: "it is better to guard against errors/ by following proffered advice than to repent of errors (βέλτιον δὲ τὰς ἁμαρτίας φυλάττεσθαι ἢ μετανοεῖν ἁμαρτόντα δὶα τοὺς κακῶς λέγοντας)."[329] Similarly to the general Stoic teaching here Plutarch notes that it is better to behave with wisdom in the first place, but when one fails to do it due to his/her lack of wisdom, it is better to repent than staying in error.

Interestingly, in some Hellenistic writings that describe one's radical transformation to a new philosophical teaching, we see that repentance plays a central role in one's change. Here, repentance denotes one's recognition of his/her previous ignorance, errors, and mistakes that have resulted from lack of knowledge.[330] In these writings, we observe similarities in the use of repentance and other associated elements with the Lukan description of Saul's repentance.[331]

7.117. See also Cicero's criticism on certain Stoics: "The philosopher surmises nothing, repents of nothing (nullius rei paenitere), is never wrong, and never changes his opinion" (*An Oration in Defense of Lucius Murena* 61); Aelius Theon in the second century CE, *Progymnasmata* 117.2; 122.9; 124.17. Cf. J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

[328] *Natural Questions* 3. Pref. 3.

[329] *How to Tell a Flatterer* 74C. In other passage, he points out lack of education as one reason of lacking wisdom and control, thus making a person to be swayed by passions. *Listening to Lectures* 37C.

[330] In his discussion on philosophical "conversions" in fact, Nock already has identified μετάνοια as implying "an intellectual value judgment, and commonly a momentary realization rather than the entry on a state." Nock, *Conversion*, 180.

[331] Some scholars noted the relation between the *Tabula* and early Christian texts such as 2 Tim. 1:19 and Mt. 7:13-14. For bibliographic information, refer to Fitzgerald and White, *The Tabula*, 20, 42 n95-98.

For instance, in the *Tabula of Cebes* introduced earlier, repentance plays an integral role in the characters' cognitive transformation when they encounter a new philosophical teaching. The tablet depicts human beings as being deceived, by drinking error and ignorance from the woman called "Deceit (V.3)." People are in the realm of False Education, being led astray by opinions, desires, and pleasures. The woman who governs this domain is "Fortune," who is metaphorized as blind, mad, and deaf, as representing the ignorant state of people without true knowledge of happiness (VII.1-VIII.4).

In this realm of deception and ignorance, people end up with an array of mischievous behaviors for their pursuit of continuous fortune. For those who receive something from Fortune, Incontinence, Profligacy, Covetousness, and Flattery are waiting to devour them. These vices further deceive people to think wrongly about life and continue their errant behaviors (IX.3). The old man describes one who is caught up by these vices:

> …he is compelled to be a slave to these women, to submit in everything, to act disgracefully, and for their sake, to commit all that is injurious, such as fraud, desecration, perjury, treason, pillage, and all that is like them. When, then, they have committed all these acts, they are delivered to Retribution. (IX.4)

In the continuing discourse, Retribution again results in remorseful feelings such as Grief, Sorrow, Lamentation and Despondency, until they encounter Repentance (X.1-4). Here we see the Stoic link between Grief and the state without knowledge, as grief being one of the most negative vices and having no rational counterpart in the Stoic system.[332] Cicero for instance writes:

[332] L. Michael White, "The Pathology and Cure of Grief (λύπη): Galen's *Peri Alupias* in Context," in Galen's De indolentia: Essays on a Newly Discovered Letter (ed. Clare K. Rothschild and Trevor W. Thompson; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 230-31. In the Stoic philosophy, a wise person must strive to be "impassible," i.e. without passion

> fools are subject to grief and feel its affects in the face of expected evil, and their souls are downcast and shrunken together not in conformity with reason. Therefore, here is the first definition: that grief is a contraction of the soul adverse to reason.[333]

Both in Cicero and the *Tabula*, grief is one of the traits that exhibits one's lack of true wisdom and being strayed by deception. The *Tabula* thus describes the power of ignorance:

> …for the portion these people drank from Deceit remains in them; likewise, ignorance (ἀγνοία) remains [in them, by Zeus,] and foolishness (ἀφροσύνη) along with it. And neither opinion nor the remaining evil will depart from them until they renounce False Education, embark on the true path, and drink their purifying powers. Then, when they have been purified and have cast out all the evils they possess – such as opinion, ignorance, and the rest – will they be saved. (XIV.3-4)[334]

Back to the explanation of the old man, he says that while most of the people suffer in this realm, only few encounter a woman called "Repentance (μετάνοια; X.4-XI.1)." What Repentance does is twofold; one is to release people from the ills, second to introduce them to true Education. Conversation continues:

> Then what happens if Repentance encounters him?" "She releases (ἐξαιρεῖ) him from his ills and introduces to him another Opinion [and Desire], who leads him to true Education, and at the same time to yet another who leads to the one called False Education." "Then, what happens?" "If," he said, "he welcomes this Opinion, the one who is to lead him to true Education, then once he is cleansed (καθαρθείς) by her he is saved and becomes blessed and happy in his life. But if he does not, he is led astray once again by False Opinion. (XI.1-2)

(ἀπαθῆ); Diogenes Laertius 7.111. We also find this motif being used in Paul's letters, such as 2 Cor. 2:2-4, 7:8-11.

[333] Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.6.14; cf. 3.11.24. For English translation, I followed White, "Galen's Peri alupias," 231. See also White's discussion in pp.13 concerning Paul's use of Stoic terms in 2 Cor. 4:8-9 to say that he was not crushed by grief in his hardships.

[334] Cf. XXV.1-2.

According to this passage, repentance is what "releases" a person from the ills – which are specified as deceit, ignorance, and the errant behaviors resulted from these wrong thinking – and leads him to the right opinion and True Education. Here we need to note the link between "Opinion" and "ills," that it is the errant opinion – which is the result of drinking "ignorance" – that made a person to have various ills. Repentance is the only way through which a person escapes from the realm of ignorance, as the old man says that there is no other path that leads to true Education (XII.3). If a person accepts this new Opinion, s/he is cleansed and led into the realm of "True Education," and gains salvation. If not, s/he is again led astray by False Opinion and cannot enter the circle of "true Education."[335] True Education then "cleanses" the person from the wrong opinion, ignorance, and rest of the subsequent erroneous thoughts and behaviors. The old man says: "Then, when they have been purified and have cast out all the evils they possess – such as opinion, ignorance, and the rest – will they be saved." (XIV. 4)[336]

In sum, according to the description of human life in this philosophical text, all people are under the power of deception, error, and ignorance which make them to have particular opinions, desires, and pleasures. While the text says that there exists degree of difference in the amount of ignorance, all drink ignorance and cannot be freed from

[335] "If…he welcomes this Opinion, the one who is to lead him to true Education, then once he is cleansed by her he is saved (σώζηται) and becomes blessed and happy in his life. But if he does not, he is led stray once again by False Opinion."

[336] In the following conversation, the old man continues to describe the realm of true education, where people have all the virtues and happiness (XV). As one enters the realm of true Education, s/he meets "Education," "Truth," and "Persuasion," and from Education s/he receives the "Knowledge," which enables her/him to have other virtues (XVIII.1-XIX.1). The person with knowledge know how to behave and can discern: "But now that he has received the knowledge of what is advantageous, he lives nobly and perceives how poorly they are doing." (XXV.3) Here, the behavioral changes occur as the natural consequence of one's possession of the right knowledge. In *Tabula*, repentance denotes a fundamental epistemological shift within the binary worldview of true and false, from ignorance to knowledge, which ultimately leads one to a totally different life.

subsequent cognitive errors (V.3). As discussed earlier, in describing the necessity of repentance for both Jews and gentiles, Luke pinpointed ignorance as the ultimate cause of their sins. In the case of the Jews, it was their ignorance of the true identity of Jesus and the divine plan that caused them to kill the messiah, and in the case of the gentiles it was their ignorance of the monotheistic true deity and false education that caused them to worship the idols. In *Tabula,* we observe that ignorance is also presented as the very cause of various kinds of vices, and this is the hurdle that one has to overcome. It is one's sudden encounter with Repentance and acceptance of it that makes a person to overpower this ignorance, as Saul unexpectedly encountered Jesus and went through the process of repentance in his "conversion."

In the Hellenistic Jewish writings of Josephus, Philo, and pseudepigraphical texts, we observe that the philosophical notion of repentance is used to depict the gentile conversion to Judaism, in particular to depict it as a radical cognitive transformation from ignorance to the true knowledge of the God.[337]

For instance, Philo in his writings uses the Greek terms μετανοέω and μετάνοια in describing the Israelite tradition of sin offerings, thus understanding repentance as the appropriate human response to wrongdoings and what cleanses one's sins.[338] Philo, however, understood this concept within the wider Greek philosophical discourses on

[337] Concerning the notion of repentance in the Hebrew scripture and use of μετανοέω or μετάνοια in the LXX, see Nave, *The Role of Repentance,* 70-73, 111-18. Josephus also uses μετανοέω and μετάνοια many times in his writings, and repentance denotes "some sort of remorse and regret concerning inappropriate intentions and/or actions or some sort of change in thinking and/or purpose." As Nave has noted, when compared to Josephus however, we observe Philo's rather developed and refined use of repentance in stressing its cognitive shift as in the Greek philosophical discourses. For the use of repentance in Josephus, see Nave, *The Role of Repentance*, 74-85.

[338] *Sacrifices of Abel and Cain 132*; *On the Change of Names* 124, 233-235; *On the Unchangeableness of God* 8; *On Dreams* 1.91; *On Flight and Finding* 158; *On Abraham* 17; *On the Life of Moses* 2.167; *The Special Laws* 1.102; *On Rewards and Punishments* 163; *Questions and Answers on Exodus* 1.15; *The Posterity and Exile of Cain* 178. Nave, *The Role of Repentance*, 86-7.

repentance, that it is a return to wisdom, reason, and virtue.[339] As in the Stoic writings, the wisest of individuals exhibit repentance to return to the God and live in harmony with the virtues, and thus eschew error.

Philo particularly stresses this cognitive aspect of repentance in his discussion on the gentile conversion. In his tractate "On Repentance" that I have introduced in Section 3.3 in relation to the motif of transition from blindness to light Philo used for the gentiles, he says that repentance is not only for the Jews but for everyone:

> The most holy Moses, being a lover of virtue, and of honor, and, above all things, of the human race, expects all men everywhere to show themselves admirers of piety and of justice, proposing to them, as to conquerors, great rewards if they repent. (175)[340]

The similar phrase of "all men everywhere" and the idea that repentance is not limited for the Jews but also for the gentiles, is also found in Acts 17:30 where Paul says to the Athenians: "While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance (ἀγνοίας), now he commands all people everywhere to repent (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν)…" In these two passages, repentance is something that allows both parties, Jews and gentiles, to join the same community of true virtue, piety, and justice.[341]

After presenting repentance as something that applies to everyone, Philo further goes on to discuss gentile conversion by pointing out their ignorance and presenting repentance as a way to acquire the right knowledge of divinity:

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[339] Nave, *The Role of Repentance*, 89.

[340] Here Philo presents Moses as a virtuous philosopher, and similar literary trope is found in *Aristeas* which present the Jewish elders as the bearers of superior philosophical truth in their response to Ptolemy II. See *Aristeas*, 187-88, 256, 284. Cf. 200-201, 235, 295.

[341] In Philo's writings, the concept of repentance involves a change (μεταβολή) or turning (τροπή) of some kind, as in *Abr.* 17-18; *Spec.* 1.238; *Praem.* 15, 163-69. In particular, as following the Hellenistic philosophical usage of this notion, repentance denotes the "reversal of a previous judgment or a change of mind, often accompanied by regret." See Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria*, 359-61.

> 177… But when one has erred (τὸ δὲ ἁμαρτόντα), then to change so as to adopt a blameless course of life for the future is the part of a wise man, and of one who is not altogether ignorant (οὐκ ἀγνοήσαντος) of what is expedient. 178 On which account he calls to him all persons of such a disposition as this, and initiates them in his laws…forsaking all the fabulous inventions of foolish men, which their parents, and nurses, and instructors, and innumerable other persons with whom they have been associated, have from their earliest infancy impressed upon their tender souls, implanting in them inextricable errors/deception (πλάνον ἀνήνυτον) concerning the knowledge of the most excellent of all things. 179 And what can this best of all things be except God? whose honors those men have attributed to beings which are not gods, honoring them beyond all reason and moderation, and, like empty minded people that they are, wholly forgetting him. All those men therefore who, although they did not originally choose to honor the Creator and Father of the universe, have yet changed and done so afterwards, having learnt to prefer to honor a single monarch rather than a number of rulers, we must look upon as our friends and kinsmen, since they display that greatest of all bonds with which to cement friendship and kindred, namely, a pious and God-loving disposition, and we ought to sympathize in joy with and to congratulate them, since even if they were blind previously they have now received their sight, beholding the most brilliant of all lights instead of the most profound darkness. 180 We have now then described the first and most important of the considerations which belong to repentance (μετάνοιαν). And let a man repent (μετανοείτω), not only of the errors by which he was for a long time deceived (ἠ μόνον ἐφ΄ οἷς ἠπατήθη πολὺν χρόνον) when he honored the creature in preference to that uncreated being who was himself the Creator of all things, but also in respect of the other necessary and ordinary pursuits and affairs of life, forsaking as it were that very worst of all evil constitutions, the sovereignty of the mob, and adopting that best of all constitutions, a well-ordered democracy; that is to say, crossing over from ignorance to a knowledge of those things to be ignorant of which is shameful; from folly to wisdom, from intemperance to temperance, from injustice to righteousness, from cowardice to confident courage (τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶν ἐξ ἀμαθίας εἰς ἐπιστήμην ὧν ἡ ἄγνοια αἰσχρόν, ἐξ ἀφροσύνης εἰς φρόνησιν, ἐξ ἀκρατείας εἰς ἐγκράτειαν, ἐξ ἀδικίας εἰς δικαιοσύνην, ἐξ ἀτολμίας εἰς θαρραλεότητα).

Here Philo says that gentiles should repent for their “inextricable errors” that they have made because of the unavoidable deception and ignorance from their infancy (178). As in the Greek tradition of a wise man who changes his previous errant thinking upon the

revelation and acceptance of a true teaching, here Philo assimilates the gentile conversion to Judaism as a wise man's cognitive shift to recover harmony with reason (177). As noted above in Section 3.3, here Philo's discourse on the gentile conversion is primarily described in cognitive terms, that the gentiles were deceived by errors concerning the true god but now learned the true piety, and this turn is depicted as their transition from darkness to light (179). Philo elaborates that this cognitive shift is "the first and most important of the considerations which belong to repentance," and that repentance releases a person from previous errors that he/she has been long deceived as well as other vices of life that were the result of the ignorance (180). In Philo's discourse we see the literary elements of transition from darkness to light and repentance are operating to depict one's religious change primarily as a radical cognitive shift, similarly to the Greek philosophical texts describing one's acceptance of a new philosophical teaching.

In the story of *Joseph and Aseneth* discussed above, repentance occurs eight times in the narrative to describe Aseneth's turning from her previous idolatry to the monotheistic Judaism. After Joseph prays for Aseneth to be counted among the God's chosen people, Aseneth returns to her room and falls down on her bed. The narrator describes her behavior as: "she wept with great and bitter weeping and repented of her infatuation with the gods whom she used to worship, and spurned all the idols." (9:2) The narrator describes extensively Aseneth's mourning over her past faults of worshipping idols, and her intense repentance is illustrated as she stops eating or drinking (11:1-12), similarly to what Saul did after he was struck by the divine light (Acts 9:18). As Saul's blindness, abstinence from eating and drinking represent his true spiritual status exposed by the divine light, Aseneth also reveals her previous spiritual status with her abstinence from eating and drinking. After this prolonged period of repentance, Aseneth confesses to God about her previous sin, which is identified as her worship of the idols because of her ignorance:

> "Spare me, Lord, because I have sinned much before you, I have committed lawlessness and irreverence, and have said wicked and unspeakable [things] before you… I have sinned, Lord, before you I have sinned much in ignorance, and have worshiped dead and dumb idols…" (12:4-5)

Further she declares: "… all the gods whom I once used to worship in ignorance: I have now recognized that they were dumb and dead idols and I have caused them to be trampled underfoot by men…" (13:11-12) It should be noted that here Aseneth's ignorance is blamed as the ultimate cause of her sins, as it was when she professed her misperception of Joseph previously:

> "3 But I, ignorant and daring (ἄφρων καὶ θρασεῖα), have despised him and spoken wicked words about him, and did not know that Joseph is (a) son of God…7 I have spoken wicked words against him in ignorance…" (6:1-7)

Considering the examples that I have introduced so far, both in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish writings on one's philosophical/religious transformation, repentance primarily denotes the radical cognitive change of a person, that one recognizes his/her previous errant thinking and change his/her view upon the revelation of a new true teaching. In particular, the examples presented above use the motif of transition from darkness to light together with repentance to denote the radical cognitive transformation. In these texts, repentance requires one's decision between two binary options and acceptance of the new teaching, which further enables him/her to be released from the previous erroneous thinking and behaviors. Here, the "sins" that one should be acquitted from are primarily the errors, ignorance, and deceptions, and the subsequent misbehaviors resulted from the lack of the true knowledge. In another Stoic passage that I have not yet discussed, sin is identified also as resulting from false opinions. The 2nd CE physician-philosopher Galen succinctly notes:

> Since sins are said to come about from false opinions (ἁμαρτήματα διὰ τὴν ψευδῆ[ν] δόχαν γίγνονται) and passion from an unreasoned impulse (πάθη διὰ τιν'

> ἄλογον ὁρμήν), it seems to me that one should first free oneself from the passions, for these also make us judge wrongly. Now passions of the soul which all acknowledge are temper, anger, fear, grief, envy, and extreme desire.[342]

In describing the process of one newly joining the Jesus movement, I showed that Luke presents the baptism of water and remission of sins as subsequent elements following one's repentance. He also depicts Saul as being in need of repentance and remission of his sins. What are the "sins" that Luke is referring to, when we consider the wider Lukan agenda of characterizing "Christian conversion" as a radical philosophical shift and Paul as a model of this process?

We observe that Luke depicts Saul's "conversion" process similarly to the descriptions in the Hellenistic philosophical and Jewish writings on one's radical cognitive transition, either from one form of philosophy to another, or from idolatry to the recognition of the monotheistic God. Considering the philosophical image of one being released from the ignorance that he/she was previously bounded by, thus also being freed from the vices that resulted from the ignorance, the phrase βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν in Luke-Acts, which is commonly translated as "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins," seems to be better translated as "a baptism of repentance for the release from sins/errors."[343] In fact, the Greek verb ἀφίημι has its root meaning as "to release, let go," as corresponding to the image of a person being released from a deception and ignorance upon the revelation of truth. While the Lukan notion of

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[342] Galen, *De propriorum animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione* 1.3.7. For English translation, refer to White, "Galen's *Peri Alupias* in Context," 227.

[343] The Greek noun ἄφεσις primarily denotes "a release, letting go, dismissal," similarly to the meaning of ἐξαιρέω, and in the inscriptions it means "remission from debt or punishment." Moulton, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*, 96; Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Here the genitive ἁμαρτιῶν can be read as a genitive of separation with verbs signifying "to cease, release, remove, restrain, give up, fail, be distant from, etc" with the noun ἄφεσις. Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2010), 235.

"sins" encompasses wider connotation than just cognitive errors, and also baptism in the name of Jesus Christ has effects not limited to one's cognitive, the Lukan stress on the cognitive aspect of "Christian conversion" makes the above translation appropriate for Acts, and especially for Paul.

Finally as we come back to Acts, are there any explicit description of Saul as being under the power of ignorance of which he should be acquitted? In Chapter 3, I argued that Saul's blindness symbolizes his true spiritual status which lacks a proper understanding of the messiah and the divine plan. His recovery of sight denotes gaining the true understanding, i.e., turning from ignorance to knowledge. Another Lukan literary device to describe Saul as ignorant and in need of repentance is his uncontrolled passion for persecuting the church.

Luke first introduces Paul in Acts 7:58 in the scene of Stephen's death: "Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man (νεανίαν) named Saul." Luke introduces Saul as participating in the Jewish crowd's maniacal killing of Stephen, since he witnessed and approved the persecution on the believers.[344] Here the Greek term that describes Saul, νεανίαν, denotes a man between youth and maturity, and also often implies innocence, inexperience, and immaturity. This description of Saul makes the audience to expect that the narrator will tell more about Saul's learning and growth in the following narrative.[345]

Saul, however, reappears quite abruptly as a violent persecutor of the church in Acts 9:1. Luke in particular describes Saul as lacking self-control, as "still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord (ἔτι ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου)…" Here the Greek term ἐμπνέω denotes something like fuming or panting, thus illustrating Saul's unbridled passion for persecuting the

[344] Betz, *Acts*, 200; Acts 7:54.
[345] Betz, *Acts*, 198.

believers.[346] While in the ancient writings insane rage was a common attribute of a persecutor, lacking control of one's temper was particularly disdainful character flaw in Greek philosophy.[347] It was opposite to the philosophical ideal of "self-control (σωφροσύνη)," the essential character of a wise person.[348] For instance, in Philo's *On Repentance* discussed previously, he describes proselytes as transforming from "ignorance to knowledge," "from folly to wisdom," and "from intemperance to temperance (ἐξ ἀκρατείας εἰς ἐγκράτειαν)." (180) The Greek term ἐγκράτεια denotes one's self-control, especially over his/her sensual pleasures and passions.[349] Also in *Joseph and Aseneth* 6:3, Aseneth confesses her previous life as "ignorant and daring (ἄφρων καὶ θρασεῖα)." Here the Greek term θρασύς denotes boldness or confidence, but when used negatively it means excessive and unreasonable audacity and insolence out of one's lack of wisdom.[350] We see that the *Joseph and Aseneth* links ignorance and rashness as two significant elements characterizing Aseneth's pre-conversion state.[351]

In Acts 26, Luke contrasts the states before and after of Saul's conversion with a drastic change in his character. In 26:9, Saul is a furious persecutor who "thought (ἔδοξα)" and thought that he "ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of

[346] Plutarch, *Mor.* 189A. Concerning the passion which is in contrast to the Stoic philosophical ideal, see White, "Galen's *Peri Alupias* in Context," 223-30.

[347] Betz, *Acts*, 240. Cf. Pentehus in Euripides' *Bacchae* 620; 2 Macc. 3:1-40; 3 Macc. 1:8-2:24; 4 Macc. 4:1-14. Cf. For interpreting Paul's madness as divine inspiration, see F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: the Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 448.

[348] Cf. Plutarch, *Alex.* 50-51. This philosophical ideal was shared by Hellenistic Jewish thinkers including Philo as the most prominent example. For other examples, see Josephus *Ant.* 2.296 (in comparison to his description of Moses in *Ant.* 3.99)

[349] Plato, *Rep.* 390b; Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.5.1; 2.1.1; Isocrates 1.21.

[350] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).

[351] See also the *Tabula* XIV.3 on "foolishness/lack of self-control": "…for the portion these people drank from Deceit remains in them; likewise, ignorance remains [in them, by Zeus,] and foolishness along with it"; Also see the example of Heliodorus discussed in Section 3.3. 2 Macc. 3:23-24.

Nazareth." There follows the Lukan version of Paul's speech on his conversion, and finally after listening to Paul's words Festus exclaims: "You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!" (v.24)[352] Here "madness (μανία)" is also a contrasting notion to the Greek philosophical ideal of "self-control."[353] In the classical world, derogation of learning and allegation of madness against philosophers were common rhetorical tools used by the anti-intellectual writers. Contrary to the doubt casted by Festus, however, Luke describes Paul as behaving like a self-controlling philosopher in the following dialogue.[354] Paul says:

> "25 I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the words of truth and soberness (οὐ μαίνομαι, φησίν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλ' ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι) 26 for the king knows about these things, and to him I speak frankly/boldly (παρρησιαζόμενος λαλῶ); for I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner."

As Malherbe commented, the details of "speaking the sober truth" and speaking "frankly" are typical literary conventions to describe a genuine philosopher who speak words of truth.[355] Luke, while repeating Paul's conversion story three times in Acts, places it in the different narratological contexts and plays variation in detail so that he can show the dramatic contrast in Paul's cognitive states between the before and after his

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[352] See Petronius, *Sat.* 44.6; *Cynic Epistles*, Socrates 6.1; 9.3; Dio of Prusa, *0r.* 8.36; 9.8, 34; 12.8-9; 34.2-4.

[353] Plato, *Phaedr.* 245a; *Prot.* 323b; *Rep.* 430e-431b; *Tim.* 71; Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.1.16; 3.9.6-7; Diogenes Laertius 3.91.

[354] For Luke's effort to depict Christianity and Paul exhibiting contemporary philosophical ideal in general, see Malherbe, ""Not in a Corner,"" 147-63, esp. 150-1; Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, 62-104; István Czachesz, "Apostolic Commission Narratives in the Canonical and Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles" (PhD diss., University of Groningen, 2002), 83-85.

[355] On "speaking the sober truth," Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 39.4; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 12.8-9; Malherbe, "Not in a Corner," 159; On "speaking freely"/"boldness," Lucian, *Demonax* 3; Plutarch, *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 71E; Malherbe, "Not in a Corner," 160.

"conversion." While he was an immature youth lacking the right knowledge and self-control in the past, he is now a wise, bold, and self-controlling philosopher.[356]

4. 4. Conclusion

In this last chapter, I showed that Luke, in contrast to Paul, who understood his experience as a call and himself as being in no need of repentance, depicted Saul as repenting as he encountered the risen Christ. In Acts 9 and 22 Saul was described as receiving the baptism and remission of sins, and in Acts 26 this notion of repentance was transferred to the general "conversion" to the Jesus movement. Luke in Acts used repentance quite distinctively from Paul's letters and other gospels by applying it both for Jews and gentiles, as all being in need of acknowledging their ignorance and misperception about the God and the messiah, and turn to the right knowledge.

Luke's use of repentance is in conjunction with the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish writers' use of this notion in depicting one's radical philosophical and religious turn. Luke depicts the pre-"conversion" Saul as embodying the qualities of a person lacking the true knowledge in Greek philosophical tradition, and contrasts this depiction with the "converted" Paul who stands as a self-controlling philosopher.

By describing Saul as repenting, Luke thus stresses him as being released from his previous ignorance of the messiah which made him to persecute the church without control. Here, Luke incorporates the notion of repentance not to present Saul's inner struggle over his past life, as understood by Augustine, Luther, and James, but to stress the radical cognitive shift that he undergoes as acquiring the right knowledge of Jesus and the God. Together with the motif of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight, the notion of repentance functions in Acts to identify Paul's experience as the same as those

[356] As Luke making Paul a Stoic philosopher in Acts 17, see also David M. Reis, "The Areopagus as Echo Chamber: Mimesis and Intertextuality in Acts 17," *Journal of Higher Criticism* 9 (2002): 259-77; Cf. Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul,* 62-104, esp. 83-91.

of the gentiles, and also to construct the "Christian conversion" as a radical cognitive turn from ignorance to knowledge.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

In this study, I argued that Luke recreated Paul as a "Christian convert" and made him a model for general "Christian conversion" that both Jews and gentiles can follow. While many scholars debate on the question whether we can call Paul a "convert," I showed that Paul understood and described his experience of the risen Christ as a call, and distinguished his change from those of the gentiles who newly join the Jesus movement. It is Luke who reinterpreted and represented Paul's experience as a typical "conversion" by dramatizing Paul's change and incorporating the motifs used in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish texts to depict one's radical cognitive transformation.

In the first chapter, I reviewed previous scholarship on Paul's "conversion," and argued that it is fundamentally anachronistic and contrary to Paul's own understanding to identify his change as a "conversion" or "transformation." Paul's experience of the risen Christ should be identified as a "calling" within the Hebrew prophetic tradition as Stendahl suggests. By identifying Paul's experience as a "calling," we can better observe the distinctive Lukan literary efforts in recreating Paul as a "convert."

In the following Chapter 2, I showed that Luke consciously used Paul's letters in writing Acts by choosing, expanding, and retrojecting some of Paul's ideas in Acts. In his undisputed letters, Paul clearly describes his change with the Hebrew prophetic language of calling, and shows his confidence about his life as a Pharisaic Jew. His view on Jesus has changed to acknowledge him as the prophesized messiah. Paul also newly realized that the salvation through Jesus extends to include the gentiles to God's chosen people, and believed that he was called for this special mission. Other than that, however, there exists stronger continuity between before and after Paul's experience of the risen Christ than often assumed. Luke on the other hand stresses the radicality and immediacy of

Paul's experience with literary elaborations as to make Paul's change a "conversion," which brings a complete and immediate sever from one's past for the acceptance of a new knowledge.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I addressed the motifs of transition from darkness/blindness to light/sight and repentance which Luke used primarily to depict Paul's "conversion." While there exist discrepancies in details between Acts 9, 22, and 26, these two literary elements persist as to show Luke's special purpose of using them in describing Paul's change. In fact, these two motifs are often used in the Greek philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish discourses to describe one's radical cognitive shift that he/she experiences as joining a new philosophical school or accepting the Jewish monotheistic religiosity. In these texts, darkness and blindness signaled one's previous state of ignorance, misunderstanding, and deception, while light and regaining of sight implied his/her gaining of true knowledge. Repentance was a crucial element in this cognitive turn, as it denotes one's recognition of his/her past ignorance and voluntary turn to the right knowledge. By applying these motifs to the "conversion" of Saul, Luke identifies Saul's change as a definite "conversion" to the Jesus movement, and also as a radical cognitive shift that turned Saul from ignorance to a correct understanding about the messiah and the plan of the God.

In his discussion on the Lukan theological project in Luke-Acts, Marguerat argued that Luke is developing a "programme of theological integration between Jerusalem and Rome" in his two-volume work.[357] Marguerat criticizes previous scholarship which constantly viewed the relationship between Jerusalem and Rome, i.e., the Judaism and the Roman World in Luke-Acts in a positive/negative polarity, and asserts that Luke does not exclude one another but link them to establish the identity of

[357] Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 66.

Christianity.[358] This Lukan agenda is observed in the geographical axis of Luke-Acts which begins in Jerusalem with the Lukan infancy narratives (Lk. 1-2) and ends in Rome where Paul is imprisoned (Acts 28). According to Marguerat, the Lukan description of certain key characters in Acts also exhibits ambivalent identity as belonging to both worlds of Judaism and Roman Empire, and similarly the Lukan syntax, themes and terms are often ambiguous as to allow double interpretations.[359]

My analysis on Luke's literary and conceptual efforts in recreating Paul's religious experience as a "Christian conversion," especially as a philosophical turn that both Jews and gentiles in the Hellenistic world can have as a model, corresponds to Marguerat's observation on Luke's theological agenda of integrating two worlds of Jerusalem and Rome in writing the early history of the church. Paul, according to Acts, is a faithful Jew who was "called" for a special mission and remained faithful to the Jewish tradition. At the same time, he is a "convert" who experienced a radical philosophical turn, as his previous misunderstanding and ignorance about Jesus and the divine plan were shattered upon the revelation of the true knowledge. Through Luke, Paul now stands as the model for the potential Jewish converts whose misperception about Jesus and God's plan should be overturned, and also for the potential gentile converts whose ignorance should be banished through the revelation of true knowledge about the monotheistic deity and his salvific plan for them.

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[358] Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 66. On the previous scholarship that polarizes Jerusalem and Rome, for those who argue that Luke favors Rome, see A. Loisy, *Les Actes des apôtres* (Paris: Nourry, 1920); Haenchen, *Acts*, 653; L. M. Wills, "The Depiction of the Jews in Acts," *JBL* 110 (1991): 631-54; for the opposite position, see S. J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987).

[359] Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 66-76.

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